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## ISSUE #139

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Pic by Sandra Markovic

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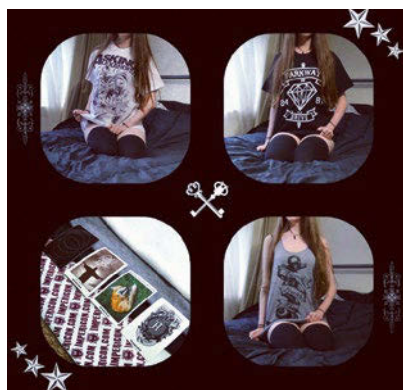
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aimie\_is\_rixon via Instagram

Thank you sooo much to @bluntmagazine for the @impericonau #merch pack I won!! Opening the parcel this morning, I was like a kid at Christmas!!



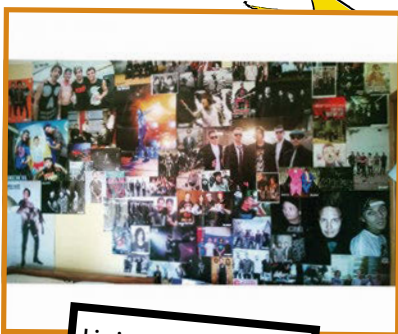
shayno13 via Instagram

Lil' man crush haha #JoelBirch  
#AhrenStringer #TheAmityAffliction  
#ManCrushWednesday #BluntMagazine



over\_the\_hedges666 via Instagram

Just picked up the new @bluntmagazine featuring @thyartinstagram. Can't wait for June 26 \m/ #HolyWar #ThyArtIsMurder #BluntMagazine



kimjones73 via Instagram

I'm running out of wall.



letter of the month

girl.at.the.rockshow via Instagram

I could be Tom's replacement #IWish  
#ItsAJoke #Blink182 #BluntMagazine

Catch up on all the latest **BLUNT** goodness from in and around the web. Keep in touch!



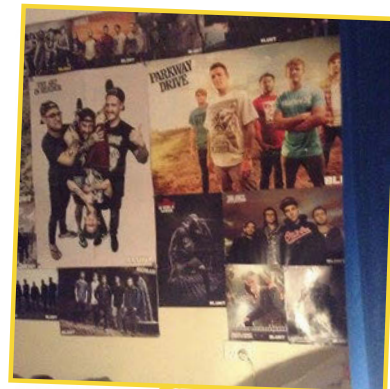
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An outtake from a shoot with @kingparrotband that's in this month's @bluntmagazine. Makeup by the awesome @makeupbykate.



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Poster wall of 2015 (so far)  
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# ILLUSTRATOR WITH... ANNIE WALTER & MARK VAN DE BEEK

The duo behind Keepsake Design, a boutique illustration and design studio, tell us how they cracked into the music industry and began creating limited edition gig posters for the likes of Slipknot, Soundgarden and Tame Impala.



## How did you get your start in the design industry?

**Mark Van De Beek:** We both started out creating flyers and artwork for local bands; Annie worked with the Sydney music scene, and I was involved in the Melbourne scene. It was always for friends' bands, and then word might spread and a band you don't know personally gets in touch! I landed a job as the in-house designer for a rock'n'roll music venue, and Annie handled the role as lead designer for a major merchandise company for a number of years.

## What does your day-to-day job involve?

**Annie Walter:** Depending on where we're at for projects, day-to-day jobs can involve brainstorming and sketching concepts, discussing ideas with each other, drawing, social media promotion, website

updates, drawing, marketing our brand, chatting with clients, drawing, YouTube cat videos and occasionally getting three to four hours of sleep.

## How did you come to design tour posters for the likes of Slipknot, Red Fang and Soundgarden?

**Van De Beek:** The bigger name jobs we've done have all come about through us initiating contact and making sure we follow up the emails shortly after. We pretty much just hassle people [laughs]. Obviously we do it in a polite and respectful manner, but it really is one of the best ways to get work.

## What is your favourite piece of work that you've created?

**Walter:** I think we both hold a special spot for the Red Fang piece. The poster was the first time we steered clear of a black-heavy design and we were lucky enough to have it printed in two different colourways: green and orange for the tour poster, red and teal on black for the T-Shirt. If you haven't checked it out, then do it!

## Tell BLUNT one thing about your job that most people would never guess.

**Walter:** As an illustrator who loves animals you WILL learn to draw with a cat sleeping on you.

## What have been the highlights of your job?

**Van De Beek:** For me personally, meeting some of the

bands I looked up to as a teenager and being told that they love the artwork you've created for them. We were lucky enough to hang out with the Mastodon guys after their recent Melbourne show and Brann [Dailor] made the effort of thanking us personally for the tour shirt we put together for them!

## What have been the lowlights?

**Walter:** Luckily there haven't been many so far. There's a certain level of patience required in this industry; you need to learn to accept rejection. Artwork doesn't always get accepted, or the changes are so vast you lose your initial connection to the piece. We try to focus on the positives; it helps keep up the momentum of what we're trying to achieve.

**Van De Beek:** We recently pitched a tour shirt for The Black Dahlia Murder and a lot of effort, research and design time went into this piece. After some back and forth with their touring company we finally got the chance to present it to Black Dahlia's merch company. I spent a lot of time reworking the email and making sure it had the best possible chance of getting approved. Roughly 10-15 minutes later the single-lined response I received read, "Hi Mark, not interested, thanks". Talk about devastating!

## What advice would you give to someone who wants to start a career in design and illustration?

**Van De Beek:** Learn the business side of things.

You can be an incredible illustrator but if you don't know the ins and outs of successful promotion and branding, then you'll still be going hungry.

**Walter:** Never stop learning and experimenting with new ways of doing things – you are not the next Instagram sensation. Be humble and network. **B**



**DALE TANNER  
OF OCEAN GROVE**

## GETTING TO KNOW

### I first discovered music when...

I was very young. My family are always good at reminding me of how annoying I was at the age of three when I would play "Eye Of The Tiger" on repeat for hours and sing every word off by heart. By the time I turned six, I had already been introduced to the world of rock and metal by my older brother Ryan. There wasn't a time where the likes of Metallica, Korn, The Offspring or SOAD weren't playing on our CD player in our bedroom.

### I realised being in a band was the best way to waste time when...

I was out of high school and I had other responsibilities like university and work.

### My first band was...

Ocean Grove! Started out when I was 16, and back then I had never played bass in my life, and had even less of a clue of how being in a band even worked.

### The first show I ever played was...

At the Pelly Bar in good old Frankston. Other than the sound guy, our parents and our good friend PJ Pantelis, you could probably count the bar flies that

were there watching on a single hand. The best performer was probably our mate Lachie, who was hiding in the back corner ready to hit a sample pad every time a bass drop was imminent.

### My favourite band is...

Mastodon. I got their album *Crack The Skye* for my 18th birthday, having never heard of them before. In many ways they have entirely changed the way I approach music, both as a listener and a writer, because you listen to their stuff and you can't help but marvel at how genius the band is.

### A band that should never have broken up are...

Underoath. They were one of the first heavier bands I ever got into, but unfortunately they broke up before I ever got to see them play. Although it was sad to see them go, it's always admirable to see a band call it a day when their heart isn't in it, even if things around them are going so well.

### The worst thing about touring is...

Not having home cooked meals. Half

the time when driving in the early hours of the morning, your only hot food options are Macca's or stale dimmies from the servo. At least mum has always got a roast in the oven waiting for me when I get home, bless her soul.

### My favourite servo purchase is...

Kooky sunnies or hats. I'm all for it. Nabbed a great pair of pink fuzzy goggles from a servo stop when we were in New Zealand last year, and needless to say I've had some decent offers for them!

### On the road I can't live without...

Our GPS, affectionately known as Rusty. The reason we call him Rusty is because the voice speaking has one hell of an Australian accent and uses some of the greatest Aussie vernacular you've ever heard when it comes to giving directions.

### If I could, I would trade lives with...

Otto Rohwedder, the inventor of sliced bread. Surely that bloke led a pretty sweet life. **B**



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# FOR FUCK'S SAKE, GO ASK AUNTIE SLATTS

Each issue King Parrot's intrepid bass player, part-time detective and alleged sex offender Slatts Everyday answers the big questions as posed by you. To get involved, use the hashtag #askauntieslatts and ask away. Please note we are not liable for any terrible or irresponsible advice he almost definitely will be sharing.



Hi Auntie Slatts,  
I'm 24, I've been working various casual jobs since I was 14, and now the daily grind is getting me down something fierce. Got any pointers for getting rich quick?  
Nathan via bluntmag.com.au

Dear Nathan,  
First of all, grind should never get you down – it's a wonderful, whimsical genre of music that should always be fun. It's like angels are coming down and spoofing in your ear holes. Getting rich quick is easy, Nathan. Find someone to love, connect and make more time for family and friends, and before you know it you'll be rich in life and be walking around all zen and shit. Aside from that, start selling that arse you naughty piece of crumpet!

Kisses, Auntie

Auntie Slatts:  
How do you djent? I really want to start a djent metal band that sounds like Volumes and Periphery. Help a brother out!  
Kain via bluntmag.com.au

Hey Kain,  
You fucken don't mate. It's silly and no one likes it. Now Shnting is a different story. Feel free to Shnt until the cows come home to root.

Auntie S x

Hi Auntie,  
Do you wanna come over for a play date?  
Hayden via bluntmag.com.au

Hayden, when was the last time your auntie came over for a play date? That's not how it works in the world of play dates. What happens usually is your mum is sick of the fucking

sight of you and before she gets to the point where she's going to drown you in the bath, she drops you at her sister's place to give her a moment to kick back and take a few huffs on the bong while you annoy the shit out of your auntie. That said, I'm busy getting my hair done so go play with your own date.

Auntie S x

Hey Auntie Slatts,  
This has been a raging debate between my friends and I that we'd love for you to settle – what's the best course of action when you find a wallet with a shit-ton of cash in it?  
James via bluntmag.com.au

James, that's easy. Return the wallet and buy shitloads of drugs and fireworks with the cash.

Auntie Slatts x

## TOP 5 REASONS TO GET OUT OF DRIVING AFTER A SHOW

★ **I'm shitfaced** – I can drive but I'm not using any of these 'roads' that everyone is raving about.  
★ **I'm going home with her/him** – No one can deny, if they're really your mates, you getting a root. Now recognising you're not getting a root, find some new

friends and share an Uber.  
★ **I have no legs** – Seriously just lie on the ground and sing, "I have no legs, I have no legs" over and over again. They'll think you're a fuckwit and move away from you.  
★ **Narcolepsy** – If you have

narcolepsy you really shouldn't drive anywhere, unless you have trained a Jack Russell to travel with you that picks up on the signs of you dozing off and at that point it licks your face. Cute!  
★ **Heroin** – Get high.



## A Band's Best Friend WITH DAVID "BOWIE" BEAUMONT OF THE BENNIES

Behind every great band there's an even cuter puppy, so it's time to meet the loveable critters waiting to greet your favourite acts as they stumble through the door after a brutal bout of touring. We'll be treating you to the friendliest and furriest, and this issue we've got Bowie from The Bennies and his scaly mate Bruce Lee.



**Pet's Name:** Bruce Lee  
**Nicknames:** Bruce, The Dragon, The Boss.  
**Age:** Going on six years.  
**Sex:** Not sure...  
**Breed:** Bearded dragon.  
**How you met:** In a carpark out the back of a gig – we shared a joint and the rest is history.  
**Favourite food:** Live crickets and other bugs, fresh veggies and hash cookies.  
**Most annoying habit:** He smokes all my weed.  
**Most endearing habit:** He smokes all my weed.  
**Usually found:** Sunbaking, napping under a log, looking sick on my shoulder, or on the couch at home.  
**The inspiration for:** Other pets who could learn a lesson about chilling out.  
**Biggest fuck up:** Every time he shits (I have to clean it up).  
**Most touching moment:** When he scares the shit out of my housemates who are afraid of him.  
**The most embarrassing thing you do with your pet when nobody's looking:** We watch martial arts movies together.  
**My pet shits all over your pet because:** He's a badarse rasta.

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# FROM HILLSONG TO HARDCORE

Chadwick Johnson, vocalist of South Carolina warriors Hundredth, might have spent time in Sydney's Hills district as a youngster but has since taken his act's fiery hardcore to the world via some left-field means.

Words by Sarah O'Connor.



**H**otly tipped US act Hundredth have been on a slow burn build these last few years, with strategic EP releases, calculated merchandising, and a non-stop list of worldwide tour dates. Finally, inevitably, Hundredth are ready to release the next step in their evolution, *Free*, through new label partners, the very pop-punk Hopeless Records.

As vocalist Chadwick Johnson, he of the distinctively owl-tattooed throat, explains, it was this very difference that made Hopeless the right home for Hundredth. "It really sparked our interest [that Hopeless had no similar acts]," he says. "I guess they heard of us through No Sleep Records and we talked back and forth then made a deal. Because it's not the scene you think of, and they don't really have any bands similar to us, we

**"IT WAS A TIME IN MY LIFE WHERE I WAS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING SOCIALLY IN THE WORLD."**  
**CHADWICK JOHNSON**

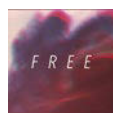
knew we'd get the attention and they'd help grow the band in that area. They're really cool; they back what we do and believe in the band and what we're about. It's been a cool relationship so far.

With the band's rapidly expanding fanbase desperate for more material, Hundredth opted to release two small EPs that were thematically dichotomous. In action, they did what any smart business would – restrict supply. Not that **BLUNT** is saying Hundredth are some unfeeling hardcore incarnation of McDonald's, just some smart guys with a plan! Johnson details the ideas behind the unusual methodology. "We put out this record called *Let Go* in 2011 and noticed that people only really listened to the first half of the

record; they were the songs they knew live and sang along to. Songs off the second half, people never knew them and I realised the people we play to in that world don't have that attention span. We had two sides of the band we wanted to explore: the tenacious, heavy, live side and the more introspective, melodic, chilled out vibe. It was a time in my life where I was trying to figure out what was happening socially in the world, 'I'm 23, what am I going to fucking do with my life?' "It worked out super perfectly with *Revolt* being this super heavy 'this is what's fucked up and why', whereas *Resist* was 'I know I've mentioned these things that are fucked up, but now I am realising I am no better than the majority of people causing these things'. It really worked out vibe-wise to have the two different sounds and ideas. This new record *Free* is the perfect balance between everything we've ever done, a way of progression that we've finally found with this record."

While Hundredth's lyrics have walked the line of standard Christian hardcore themes, and with Johnson himself even spending time in Sydney's Hills district studying at the massive Hillsong church, Johnson is quick to distance the band's work though not without some honest admissions.

"None of us are Christians," he admits. "On the first record, I had a lot of Christian beliefs and over the years, it's been like the evolution of our band. Those two EPs are a testament to my faith; I laid out all my questions and frustrations like how religion makes things toxic and how people attach their beliefs to things that fuel injustice and hatred around the world. I walked away from that to a more open-minded, well-travelled point of view. People believe different things and that's what makes humanity cool." Which now brings us to Hundredth's latest and greatest work, *Free*. **B**



**FREE**  
**IS OUT NOW ON HOPELESS/UNFD.**



## VICTORIAN HALLS

**What other names did you consider calling yourselves?**

I didn't join the band until a few years back, but the story behind Victorian Halls is a good one. Apparently, it was a charity for some orphans at a recreational centre and a bunch of the poor kiddies got trampled to death. **BRUTAL.**

**Where are you from and what would be the most recognisable local landmark?**

Chicago. I mainly focus on the little things, but if anything I'd have to say all of Lake Michigan.

**Who is in your band, what do they play and what is their non-musical superpower?**

Sean Lenart (guitars, Geddy Lee of the band, lyrical mastermind, brings an incredible energy); Mike Tomala (drums, obviously Neil Peart); Jordan Dismuke (bass, says both Sean and Mike are equally as good at schooling each other in *NHL '95* for Sega).

**Name your three biggest influences.**

Slipknot, Brand New, and Michael Jackson.

**What's the usual first topic of conversation when you take a break at rehearsal?**

Usually there's talk of new ideas or apps for smart phones, like Dong Alert – an app that can tell the exact location of the male member within a 10-mile radius.

**Tell us about your most memorable show.**

It would probably have to have been one of my first shows with Victorian Halls. We played at a frat party and I had no idea how the energy was going to be, it being one of my first gigs and all. I ended up puking behind my amp in the middle of a song during the set. It was amazing. I also think Sean ended up breaking his foot that night.

**If you could be endorsed by one company, who would it be?**

Some ritzy designer like Yves Saint Laurent, or a company that can fleek me out with an insane amount of things that are black.



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# LIFE IN A JAR

Pennsylvania crew Superheaven teach us that some records don't fit into a cookie cutter genre, no matter how much we want them to.

Words by Peter Zalugny.



Grunge is a funny thing. For an outside set of ears it's so easy to identify – heavy riffs, loads of fuzz and distortion coupled with a melodic touch and utterly destructive drums. But these so-called hallmarks are usually just a shred of the sonic scale explored by these bands, so it's often easier to reject the genre entirely in pursuit of something a little more broad. That's why Pennsylvania outfit Superheaven, despite constant comparisons to the '90s grunge greats, prefer to keep it simple.

"I don't really think of it as grunge or shoegaze or whatever else they call us, our goal is never to play like this genre or that genre; we just play rock music and write how we know to write," explains Taylor Madison, part singer part guitarist. "We don't make music for the sake of making something we think people will like." That's not to say the comparisons are totally invalid –

**"I DON'T REALLY RESPECT  
A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO  
AREN'T GENUINE."  
TAYLOR MADISON**

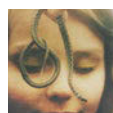
Superheaven's new record, *Ours Is Chrome*, is a veritable melting pot of '90s-esque alternative tones. Dreamy, ambient melodic waves carelessly drift in and out of youthful harmonies swirling atop savage guitar riffs and pounding drums. Yet there's a consistent heavy garage rock vibe that often sinks into grimy, sludgy, unwashed foundations. It's the kind of record that sounds similar to a bunch of bands, but still has a voice of its own. "I was lucky because my dad has pretty broad tastes in music, so when I was younger he would listen to The Smashing Pumpkins, Nirvana and Bush but he also really liked Prince, Michael Jackson and stuff like that," Madison continues. "And I think all of us are like that, we all like a lot of different kinds of music, but overall the one thing we all agree that we like is just loud, over-driven guitars and pretty straightforward rock." *Ours Is Chrome* does uphold the melancholy tone often associated with grunge, however.

"We write pretty sad songs; a lot of the subject matter is pretty personal. There's nothing positive or anything like that," Madison agrees. But there's a certain sincerity in their expression that makes it much more than a simple "sad record". It's honest, but not painfully so, maybe a little tormented but certainly not depressing. Instead Superheaven tackle serious subject matter with an agreeable, genuine sentiment, as if to say, 'Here are some things that we want to talk about'.

On the whole, it's an album that explores the frustrations of being in a band, with words co-penned by Madison and fellow singer/guitarist Jake Clarke. Yet tucked around the prominent theme are deeply personal stories, like the time Madison's family were evicted from their home while the band were touring Europe. Then there's song about his brother, who was paralysed after a motorcycle accident and is now in a wheelchair.

"I guess I write about the things that we write about because those are the things that are going on in my life," Madison says in earnest. "Our band's never written songs about heartbreak, or not in the traditional sense, and I'm not really the kind of person to write negatively about females or my relationships with my significant other, because I've never thought negatively about that my whole life.

"I think it's important to be real for lack of a better term; I don't really respect a lot of people who aren't genuine and just do what they think other people want them to," he continues. "We're very honest people. If you talk to us or ask us questions we'll give you a truthful answer, and we pride ourselves on that." So do they fit the grunge criteria? Technically. And they make grunge music? In a way. So that means they're a grunge band, right? Who the hell cares, because even though a few influences rest on Superheaven's sleeves, they don't really bother with the coattails of the past – and neither should anyone else. **B**



**OURS IS CHROME  
IS OUT NOW ON SIDEONEDUMMY/  
COOKING VINYL.**



## THE PRETTY LITTLES

**What other names did you consider calling yourselves?**

Oh fuck, it's been that way for seven years or something. God knows how or why we ended up with this.

**Where are you from and what would be the most recognisable local landmark?**

We're from Melbourne, and The Vasco Era would be the landmark.

**Who is in your band, what do they play and what is their non-musical superpower?**

Jono Gooley (bass, really good litterer); Will Batrouney (drums, makes a really good homemade hummus); Simon Boyd (guitar, has heaps of sick guns).

**Name your three biggest influences.**

Pixies, The Vasco Era, and Paul Kelly.

**What's the usual first topic of conversation when you take a break at rehearsal?**

Something doodle related or Game Of Thrones.

**What's your pre-show warm-up routine?**

Hands in, hands up, and a jig for Jesus – our saviour and provider.

**Tell us about your most memorable show.**

We played The Vasco Era's last ever proper show at The Espy and I got to hit a drum to "Honey Bee". That was SICK.

**What band would you most like to share the stage with?**

Black Rebel Motorcycle Club. They are just so rad. The best bits of The Black Keys and The Black Angels and The White Stripes all rolled into one. Or Paul Kelly. Or Pixies. Imagine that?

**What is your latest release and why should we buy it?**

It's called *Gospel* and it's an eight-track fella with a bunch of heart and guitars and stuff.

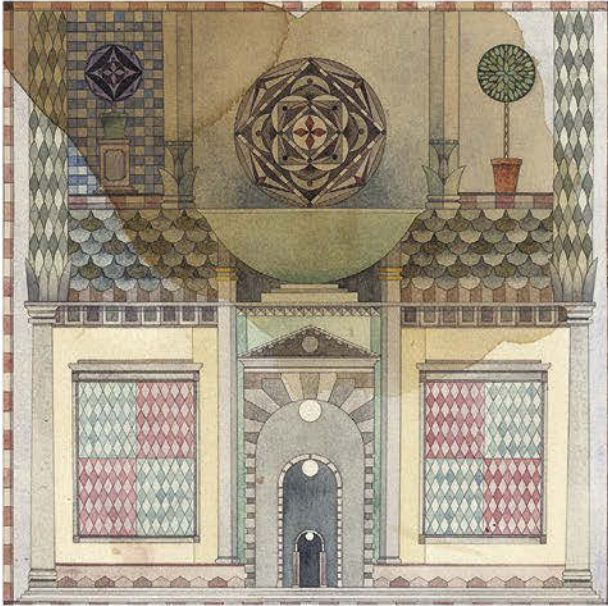
**If you could be endorsed by one company, who would it be?**

Hmmm Fender. Then I could have one of everything, please.

**Why are you going to make it to the top over all the other contenders in the musical arena?**

We're not, but that's okay.

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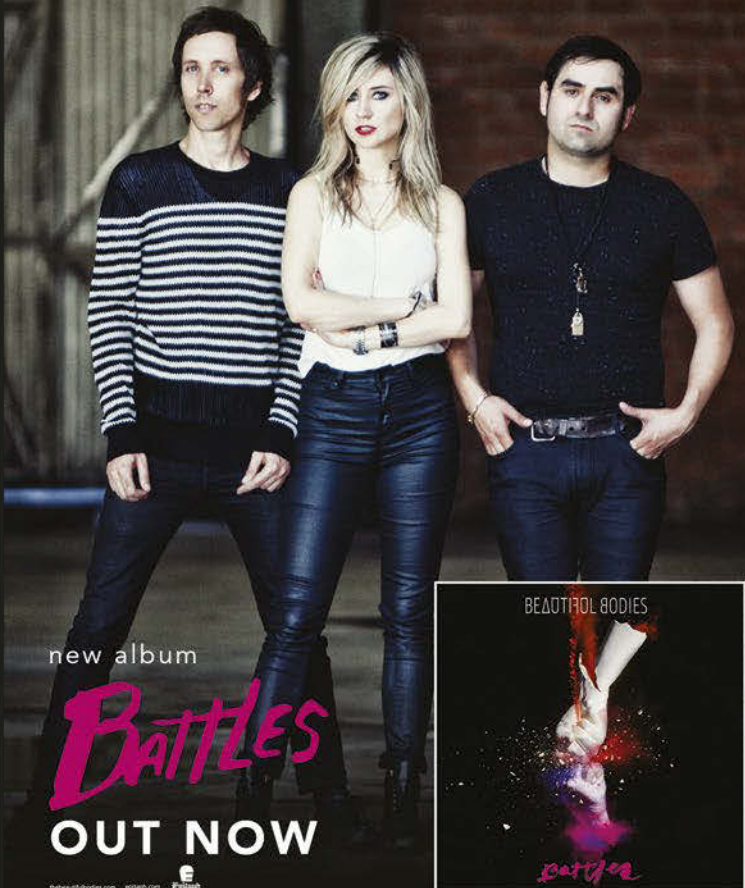
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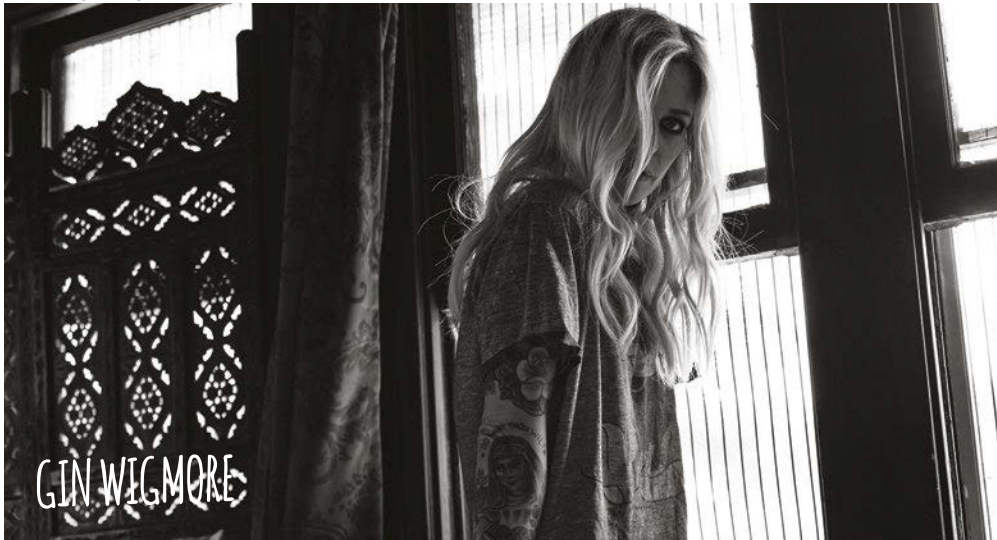
**BATTLES**  
OUT NOW



# BAD TO THE BONE

Ever felt like you were destined for something? New Zealand songstress Gin Wigmore finds that music was always on the cards, regardless of what she may have had in mind.

Words by Emily Swanson.



There's a good chance Gin Wigmore is the most polite badarse you're ever likely to come across. Rather than use her feminine wiles to climb the pop diva ranks, the striking Kiwi channels her soulful croon into feisty blues rock wrenched straight from the heart; the kind you'd hear from the likes of Amy Winehouse, Paloma Faith, or Duffy. Amazingly, music was never her first career choice. As a teen, a song she penned in memory of her late father – "Hallelujah" – won her the International Songwriting Competition, and she became the youngest and first to do so as an unsigned talent. Reluctant to enter the contest herself, her sister Lucy submitted the track on her behalf. Gin was adamant that she'd become a primary school teacher. "It's strange how when something's really destined for you, it just keeps happening and appearing in your life,"

**"YOU'VE GOTTA GROW; YOU NEVER WANT SOMEONE TO JUST BE THE SAME PERSON, NOT EVEN IN MUSIC."**  
**GIN WIGMORE**

she says. "Everything kept falling into place with music. I kept finding myself in these incredible positions, sitting in front of people that could potentially give me a record contract and thinking, 'Maybe I should give this a go.'" The foundations for her style were laid early: she was raised on Édith Piaf, Karen Dalton, and Ann Peebles – those powerful female artists that allow you to hear every little crack and croak in their singing. "I listened to singers that were very real, and that's what I've always tried to do with my voice, just sing however the fuck it comes out and record that." Did we mention she can swear with the best of them? When we meet Wigmore in Sydney, she's a total free spirit with sleeve tats and a down-to-earth way about her. You wouldn't immediately think that her songs have had television careers all of their own. Her sultry breakout hit "Black Sheep" has crept onto *Grey's Anatomy*, *Teen Wolf* and *The Good Wife*, while the

soulful rocker "Kill Of The Night" has featured on *Pretty Little Liars* – a slew of advertising spots shared between them. Her new album, *Blood To Bone*, is two months away from being released at the time of our chat, and after a four-year break between releases, she's audibly excited. "Oh man, it's still not out of my hands, fuck..." she sighs. "I'm kind of scared to think what I'm going to be like with a child if this is any representation. It's been such an adventure and it's so cool to be in my late 20s and feel really in my stride. I've got more self-respect and value for my life and you kind of start spreading that across your work, your relationships, your friendships – everything. I really give a fuck. I wanted to jump in the deepest, deepest end of music for me and see if I could swim, and that meant I was listening to some old Portishead, I was listening to hip hop for the first time, I was listening to electronic music and synths... You've gotta grow; you never want someone to just be the same person, not even in music."

Music again played a fortuitous role in Wigmore's life when she appeared on the 2013 Vans Warped Tour. "Dude, I was such a fish out of water," she recalls. "That is *THE* festival to be on for punk, metalcore and hardcore bands, and I had not grown up with that kind of music. I think we had most of the mums chaperoning their kids coming to see my show!" she laughs. A strange fit, to be sure, but with the backing of festival founder Kevin Lyman, Wigmore played the tour's entirety and just so happened to meet her future husband – letlive's enigmatic frontman Jason Butler. And before you ask, yes, she too fears for his safety every time she sees him dangling from another lighting rig. "He's a maniac; it's so intriguing to me," she gushes. "I've gotten him health insurance now 'cos he didn't have that... But I just admire him no end; I think he's the last of a dying breed of actual, legit frontmen and we need more people like that. So I don't want him to change; I don't want him to die, but I don't want him to change either," she laughs. **B**



**BLOOD TO BONE**  
IS OUT NOW ON UNIVERSAL



## WE MAY FALL

**What other names did you consider calling yourselves?**

Cross My Heart, Visions, At First Light... The list goes on.

**Where are you from and what would be the most recognisable local landmark?**

We're from Sydney. We have all the landmarks that make Australia recognisable.

**Who is in your band, what do they play and what is their non-musical superpower?**

T-Bones Pennington (guitar, production skills and pulling beautifully creepy faces); Matt "The Deez" De Georgio (drums, has the ability to hear things that others can't); JJ Brady (vocals, has the ability to make anything look better gombified or dead and his disturbingly vast knowledge on the subject of blood); Rudy Misesk (guitar, has the ability to build anything, fix anything or make anything from nothing); Stewart Harris (bass, his knowledge of pop culture references and the ability to turn a phrase, even if it isn't the correct one).

**Name your three biggest influences.**

All the clichés of our genre: Architects, Bring Me The Horizon, and The Ghost Inside.

**What's your pre-show warm-up routine?**

Hugs. So many man hugs. Oh, and fist bumps.

**Tell us about your most memorable show.**

Supporting Norma Jean. It was intimate and mental, and everyone brought their "A" game that night.

**What band would you most like to share the stage with?**

Architects. They have more to say than the average hardcore/post-hardcore band getting around, and more than that, they just seem like rad guys.

**What is your latest release and why should we buy it?**

Our debut album *You Wear Those Scars Well*. You should buy it because you will find something in there that is yours. It will belong to you.



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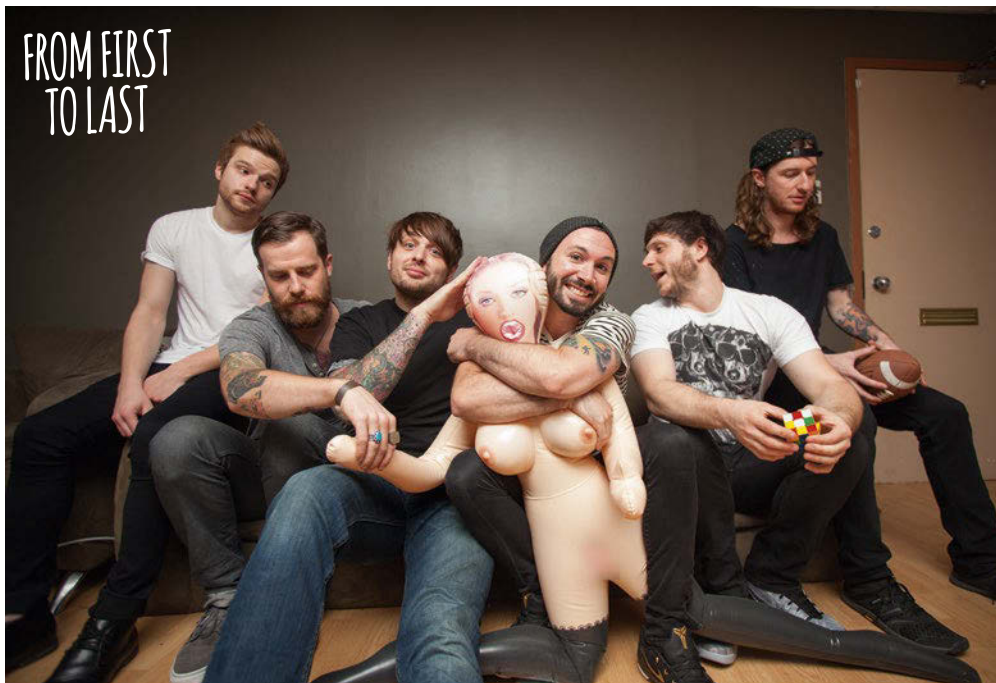
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# REWIND, REPEAT

They've spawned Skrillex, taken a three-year hiatus, crowdfunded, and borrowed a member from Periphery – just who are From First To Last? Founding guitarist Matt Good tells **BLUNT**.

Words by Dave Drayton.



**B**efore Sonny Moore and his half-shaved head became synonymous with EDM and the drops we were waiting for the world over, the musician now known as Skrillex was then significantly less well known as the frontman of From First To Last. It was the mid-2000s, the halcyon-era for Hot Topic hardcore and with a title like *Dear Diary, My Teen Angst Has A Body Count*, the band were sure to ride the crest of the wave with their 2004 debut. Moore was actually a last minute

**"IT'S FUNNY, THE EXACT SAME SCENARIO HAPPENED WITH SONNY MOORE 10 YEARS AGO."**  
**MATT GOOD**

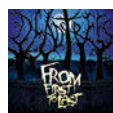
addition, flown in as a guitarist and soon finding himself relieving Matt Good, the main orchestrator of From First To Last, and at times the band's reluctant frontman. A decade later, a similar set of unexpected circumstances resulted in Periphery frontman Spencer Sotelo joining From First To Last as lead vocalist for the band's first album in five years, *Dead Trees*. A crowdfunded recording that has since found a home at Sumerian Records, the band were initially only intending to do an EP.

"We made the kickstarter and originally I was going to make a record with whatever members were still interested in making it," Good explains. Moore was approached, but declined offers to be involved. "But then people like Spencer joined and Taylor joined and we got together at the studio and started doing it we realised that between all of us we had the potential to do so much more than just the initial EP I had promised everyone. So we felt it was almost a cop-out not to do

an entire record because we are all so experienced. Last, I was just really wanting an outlet to make some new music with, and that band, I've been doing it my whole entire life, you know, I've been doing it since high school, and a bunch of people were asking, 'Hey, now that you're not in D.R.U.G.S. anymore you should think about making another From First To Last record one of these days, a bunch of people would like that.'" While at Taylor Larson's Oceanic Recording studio working as a producer on a record for Capture The Crown, Good met Periphery frontman Sotelo, who was also using the studio, after requesting Larson introduce the two – no sooner the three were all bandmates. In the record's initial stages, while still an EP, Good was once again a reluctant lead vocalist – he likens the co-opting of the Periphery frontman to the experience of Moore's joining of the band. And, raising questions as to whether they are on a fruitless search to replicate Moore, he likens the singing styles of the two.

"I thought it'd be cool to have some guest singers and I asked Taylor about Spencer because I really loved his voice and it was reminiscent of Sonny's voice – just the raw, authentic aggression. It reminded me of the same feeling. We hit it off, that was awesome, and that eventually just became, 'Hey man, I know this is kind of crazy and everything, but do you just want to be the band's singer?'"

"It's funny, the exact same scenario happened with Sonny 10 years ago; he came in, we'd just met him and were like, 'Hey man, your voice sounds pretty cool, we don't even know you but do you wanna be the band's singer?' and he was like, 'Sure'. It's kind of weird, I think it's an omen or something." **B**



**DEAD TREES**  
IS OUT NOW ON SUMERIAN/WARNER.



## BRIGADES

**What other names did you consider calling yourselves?**

I'm sure there were a number of ridiculous names that I can't even remember when I first started the band.

**Where are you from and what would be the most recognisable local landmark?**

Spartanburg, South Carolina. The Gaffney Peach (a giant peach water tower that looks like a sunburnt butt), The Beacon (best burger joint in the country), Table Rock, and Wofford College.

**Who is in your band, what do they play and what is their non-musical superpower?**

Darren Young (vocals, Coach Mike – the He-Man Giant); Charlie Jackson (guitar, vocals, Party Pack Charles – expert pizza maker and provider of party essentials); Dylan Cobden (bass, vocals, Crown Loyal – magical drinking powers); Frank Bryant (guitar, Nature Boy – he can get lost in the woods or mountains for days and find his way home); Damian Johnson (drums, Blunt Man – pretty self explanatory).

**Name your three biggest influences.**

Further Seems Forever, The Used, and Stretch Armstrong.

**What's the usual first topic of conversation when you take a break at rehearsal?**

We usually just make fun of each other, discuss future plans, and talk about gear.

**What's your pre-show warm-up routine?**

We usually do vocal warm-ups together, stretch, and have a few laughs... Oh, and look for Frank because he's usually off wandering around the city.

**What band would you most like to share the stage with?**

My Chemical Romance, because their live shows are so incredible. That would be something we would want to experience. We're also playing with H2O next month and that's been a dream of ours as well.

**If you could be endorsed by one company, who would it be?**

Any domestic beer company would be sweet!

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# BULLY FOR YOU

They're here, they're queer, and they don't give a rat's if you like it or not. Ahead of the release of their second studio album, Karina Utomo details High Tension's tour antics, brutal team-ups and making rockstar dreams come true.

Words by David James Young.



**W**hat would you classify as a top tour highlight? A perfect set? A picturesque drive? How about pelting a Sherrin at the arse of a giant knight? High Tension recently made an all-important pit stop at a Knockrow tourist destination so that drummer Damian Coward could run up to the towering statue and do the deed, complete with a Slayer soundtrack. "I've been watching it on a loop," cackles the band's frontwoman Karina Utomo on the footy-throwing stunt, which you can find on the band's Facebook and Instagram if you're so inclined. "Damian is a constant

**"I FIND 'BULLY' TO BE A REALLY BRUTAL WORD."**  
**KARINA UTOMO**


source of hilarity on tour. We all count ourselves incredibly lucky that he's back with us." The band is fresh from an extensive national tour alongside fellow Melbourne nutjobs King Parrot and resident church-burners Colossus, which took them through most major cities with a sprinkling of regional activity. It coincided nicely with the fact that King Parrot's own Matt Young is a guest vocalist on High Tension's second album, *Bully*, adding his distinctive shriek to the track "Lapindo". Utomo is quick to gush about the gent that she has come to puntastically know as her 'wing-man'. "I have so much respect for what Youngy does," she says. "I don't think it's at all easy to do what he does. I was a big King Parrot fan even before we had played our first show with them. He actually originally approached me to see if we would be interested in guesting on their album [Dead Set], but when it became clear that they were going to be recording in the States it didn't logistically work out. Thankfully, we were able to grab Matt when he was back in town taking a break between

tours. He really shines on this song – it's a hate letter to one of the richest men in Indonesia; and it's one of my favourite riffs on the album."

When it came to naming the follow-up to the band's debut LP, 2013's *Death Beat*, Utomo says that a few options were thrown around. The succinct five-letter title, however, managed to provoke exactly the right imagery for everyone in the band.

"I find 'bully' to be a really brutal word," she says. "It can be interpreted in so many ways and it's such a horrible thing to experience. There's one song where [guitarist] Ash [Pegram] contributed lyrics that touch on homophobia and friends that have been gay-bashed. It's been one of the hardest songs for me to get my head around that we've done."

At two live shows over the past year, High Tension have allowed themselves to serve as vessels for rockstar aspirations. During a show at Sydney's Black Wire Records and a show at Melbourne's Wrangler Studios, two different guitar players were called up to play the band's song "High Risk, High Rewards". Utomo gleefully explains how they came to be: "The first one was an Indonesian friend called Adi," she says. "He's a really talented fashion designer – he turned down doing a dress for Katy Perry so he could make my dress for the ARIAs! He's also a massive fan of the band, and one day told me it was his dream to get up and play that song with us. I was like, 'Really? Of course we can make that happen!'"

As for Adi's Victorian counterpart? "He's a young fan called Callum, who posted a video of himself playing the song. Ash was like 'Dude! You're playing it better than me! It blows my mind that people have invested that kind of dedication to our band. It's just awesome, man.'" 



**BULLY**  
IS OUT JULY 10 THROUGH DOUBLE CROSS/  
COOKING VINYL.



## NOPES

**What other names did you consider calling yourselves?**

We considered The Whom, Hank Hell, Daymare, and Kevin's Lubricated Mouth.

**Where are you from and what would be the most recognisable local landmark?**

San Francisco Bay Area. Every In-N-Out Burger in the Bay Area is a landmark.

**Who is in your band, what do they play and what is their non-musical superpower?**

Eagret Hansen (shreds at guitar, really good at opening jars); Alex Petralia (uses his mouth, acts like a dad); Kevin Quijivix-Sweeney (plays bass and with our hearts); Gabe Simmons (drops the beat, gets really sweaty for no reason).

**Name your three biggest influences.**

Burritos, weed, and burritos.

**What's the usual first topic of conversation when you take a break at rehearsal?**

Netflix, taking dumps, and what we saw in the tenderloin that day.

**Tell us about your most memorable show.**

We played a venue in Oakland, California on a night that was raining and a ton of people were going outside in between bands and kept tracking more and more water in. By the time we went up, the place was like a Slip 'N Slide. Alex slipped, hit his head on the drum set and got concussed, along with two other people in the crowd.

**What band would you most like to share the stage with?**

The Ramones because they're dead and it would be cool to play with zombies.

**What is your latest release and why should we buy it?**

Our EP *Nectar Of The Dogs* is out on Magnetic Eye Records. You should buy it because it's fast, loud, and catchy. And we also want your money.

**If you could be endorsed by one company, who would it be?**

McDonald's. Not because we like the food, just because they're everywhere.

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\*NO FHITS

FEED HER TO THE SHARKS

## WHORETOPSY

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SOUNDWORKS

NUCLEAR BLAST

HEAVY METAL

# THE THORN IN HIS SIDE

As cliché as it sounds, they say the darkest hour is just before the dawn, and things got pretty dark for Senses Fail's Buddy Nielsen. We spoke to the frontman about the road to recovery and self-development that has reshaped his identity and formed the basis of his band's newest disc.

Words by Chris Neill.



Off the top of your head, name five women in the alternative music scene. Now, name five people who don't identify as being heterosexual. Not that easy, is it? The punk rock and metal scenes have long been a straight boys' club, so when an artist comes out and declares that their identity goes against this perceived norm – see: Laura Jane Grace of Against Me! – it's a big goddamn deal. In a blog post written late last year, Senses Fail frontman Buddy Nielsen tore his heart from his chest. "For over nine years I suffered in a cycle of shame over my sexuality, substance abuse, sexual addiction, anxiety, depression, grief and self-loathing," he wrote. Over the course of the last year, Nielsen has been travelling a hard road of personal recovery and

**"IT'S A PROCESS OF PURIFICATION, AND THAT'S WHAT THIS RECORD IS ABOUT, PURIFICATION AND TAKING THE THORNS OUT." BUDDY NIELSEN**

evolution, coming to terms with just exactly who he is and moving past who he was. As he has done in the past, he channelled these emotions into his music, leading to the creation of Senses Fail's sixth full-length, *Pull The Thorns From Your Heart* – an album he considers to be the most personal thing he's ever written.

"To step into the light – the joy, the happiness and all the wonderful things that are available in our life – we need to go through some pain and transformation, and let go of our wounding," Nielsen says of the album's title, taken from the words of Sufi poet Rumi. "If you throw your heart into a briar patch you're going to collect some thorns; it's painful taking them out, but ultimately it's healing. It's a process of purification, and that's what this record is about – purification and taking the thorns out. It's about seeing the good and letting go of what's painful."

With all of the personal complications Nielsen had been facing, this purification was exactly what he needed. In a music scene built around being subversive and quite literally alternative to the norm, representation matters, and the singer understands the importance of being a role model to others like him – especially given he never had one to call his own.

"I never had someone in this music scene to be like, 'Hey, this could be me' and know that it's safe and it's okay by looking at this person being successful and standing on their own," Nielsen says. "I never had that."

While the response to the frontman's blog has been overwhelmingly supportive, he also prepared himself for the few unfortunately inevitable homophobic comments that would be thrown his way. What he didn't prepare for, however, was the hostility he faced from his assumed allies.

"The people who make up the activist side bring an aggression, that like I'm not doing a good enough job of being out and an activist," he begins. "That's new to me; I expected this hate from one side but then I get this, 'Hey, you're not doing a good job. You need to be more of an activist. You need to be more of this or that.' I'm just trying to be myself and hopefully that promotes safety for other people; I can't do much other than learning as I go along."

The New Jersey four-piece may have moved on from their screamo Golden Age, yet an incredibly dedicated fanbase still persists, which Nielsen chalks up to the genuine honesty found in Senses Fail's songs. Nielsen – the band's last remaining original member – still powers through those mid-'00s tracks live, even if there is a modern disconnect to the hard-partying ways depicted within.

"Once they're recorded and released, they're not my songs anymore; I don't have much of an emotional attachment to them because they become other people's songs. Other people begin attaching themselves to them and it becomes a sort of collective process."



**PULL THE THORNS FROM YOUR HEART**  
IS OUT NOW ON PURE NOISE/SONY.



## GATEWAY DRUGS

**What other names did you consider calling yourselves?**

Gateway Drugs – always has been, always will be.

**Where are you from and what would be the most recognisable local landmark?**

We are from Los Angeles, and the most recognisable landmark is the Church of Scientology.

**Who is in your band, what do they play and what is their non-musical superpower?**

Liv Niles (vocals, guitar, bass, communicating with Elvis from beyond the grave); Gabriel Niles (vocal, drums, knitting holiday sweaters); Blues Williams (bass, guitar, telekinesis); Noa Niles (vocals, guitar, painting portraits of Tom Jones).

**Name your three biggest influences.**

Johnny Cash, The Velvet Underground, and The Cramps.

**What's the usual first topic of conversation when you take a break at rehearsal?**

Smoke break.

**What's your pre-show warm-up routine?**

Meditation, chants, and watching *Purple Rain*.

**Tell us about your most memorable show.**

When we opened up for The Jesus and Mary Chain in Toronto. They are one of our favourite bands, so it was a very surreal experience.

**What band would you most like to share the stage with?**

Singapore Sling. They are one of our favourite bands that have come out recently.

**What is your latest release and why should we buy it?**

Our latest release is our debut album *Magick Spells*. We worked very hard on it, and we are proud. It is dedicated to you; buy it if you like it. Support your local record store.

**If you could be endorsed by one company, who would it be?**

Nike.



## PICTURE PERFECT

**What other names did you consider calling yourselves?**

Simon & The Mexican Walking Fish or Glenn Hopper & The Cat People.

**Where are you from and what would be the most recognisable local landmark?**

The Blue Mountains, so either the Three Sisters or Warrimoo Kitchens.

**Who is in your band, what do they play and what is their non-musical superpower?**

Cameron Hill (bass, looks Amish – that's a superpower, right?); Simon Bowles (drums, is a wizard so he has endless superpowers); Gavin Bowles (vocals, guitar, ability to kill a yak from 200 yards away with mind bullets).

**Name your three biggest influences.**

Hard to choose. Personally, for guitar playing I would say Chris Cheney from The Living End is a big influence; for songwriting Elvis Costello is definitely an influence; and just all round, I would say Green Day.

**What's the usual first topic of conversation when you take a break at rehearsal?**

Our imminent free-form jazz exploration side-project. And proper beard grooming technique.

**Tell us about your most memorable show.**

We supported Calling All Cars at a show last year which was a lot of fun and they're nice guys. But some colourful locals made it an interesting evening – an old, washed-up muso giving us a hard time and dumped our merch in the urinal and an over-excited punter poured an entire beer over the singer from Calling All Cars mid-song.

**If you could be endorsed by one company, who would it be?**

Probably Lan Choo Tea. They just got that flavour right.

**Why are you going to make it to the top over all the other contenders in the musical arena?**

Because we sound nothing like Staind.

**Who has the best beard in rock?**

It's gotta be Billy Gibbons from ZZ Top.

# SEASON OF THE WITCH

Undeterred by a chief songwriter's departure, Cradle Of Filth's "guiding light" Dani Filth tells **BLUNT** about the macabre metal mainstays' "fucking awesome" new release.

Words by Brendan Crabb.



Now on their 11th album, English extreme metallers Cradle Of Filth remain a facile target for critics and cynics. Namely, an extensive, near-comical list of former members has poured gasoline on the flames for those who perceive diminutive vocalist Dani Filth as a ruthless, dictator-type figure.

However, the banshee-shrieking main-man cites culling a track from new record *Hammer Of The Witches*, following a band vote, despite it containing "probably the best set of lyrics I've ever written" as evidence this is a misconception. "Dictatorship isn't... Guiding light, maybe, [being] the person who's still in the band from the very early days. If you were to spend any amount of time on the road with us you'd realise that it is a family, and everybody looks out for each other."

The brethren underwent further personnel shifts prior to *Hammer...*, their first LP since inking a new worldwide deal with Nuclear Blast, including long-time guitarist/songwriter Paul Allender exiting for the second time. The frontman lauds this incarnation's solidarity, insisting the two-axe tandem of new recruits Richard Shaw and Marek "Ashok" Šmerda afforded an added dimension. "Everybody contributed to the record; we had a full six people who worked very hard. Before we were only really utilising the one guitarist for writing; we had a live guitarist, but Paul was adamant that he wanted to write the material mostly on his own. Now we have two guitarists and henceforth have a lot of the old dual guitars going on, the Murray/Smith, Hanneman/King, Priest vibe. Lots of melody, really fast picking, solos – a revitalised energy back into the band."

Was he astonished by Allender's departure?

"I think it was a while coming. It wasn't bad, it was quite..." he pauses while seeking the appropriate words. "It was good between us. It didn't finish badly. It was just one of these things that grew, with his moving to the States and then he had some personal issues which meant he couldn't do the last co-headline tour with Behemoth. The reason we had to get another guitarist was because our live guitarist James [McIlroy] suffered a severe neck injury and had to undergo an operation.

"There's only ever been two people sacked from the band, and that was all pre-1999. People come and go because they start families, other people just think they can do a better job on their own so they go off and form their own band. It's just one of the things of being in a successful band. You get a lot of eyes and a lot of press; people get wooed by the bright lights and that. Other people just can't take the pressure of being in a band like this, because it's a lot of work. It's getting even harder nowadays with people downloading stuff for free. As long as the core element [remains] and this album proves it; it sounds like Cradle Of Filth through and through. Right to its little blackened heart."

**"PEOPLE JUST CAN'T TAKE THE PRESSURE OF BEING IN A BAND LIKE THIS."  
DANI FILTH**

The new material's inspiration was conjured forth from the *Malleus Maleficarum*, a tome detailing the torture and persecution of witches and how to legally punish them – ideal fodder for the grisly troupe. "We've explored these themes before, but not in such detail... The whole album is based in the medieval, but drawing parallels with what's going on with the world nowadays, because obviously Cradle Of Filth will always [be] written in a different time epoch, be it Victorian or medieval. Rarely does Cradle Of Filth venture into the world of spaceships, cars and modern technology. It's just what we do really, that's our thing." **B**



**HAMMER OF THE WITCHES  
IS OUT JULY 10 THROUGH NUCLEAR BLAST.**



**THERE'S 17 KILLER NEW TRACKS ON THIS ISSUE'S MISH MOSH CD AND YOU CAN READ ALL ABOUT EM RIGHT HERE. KEEP IT BRUTAL.**



**1 THY ART IS MURDER**  
**LIGHT BEARER**

**Label:** UNFD

**Web:** [facebook.com/thyartismurder](https://facebook.com/thyartismurder)

**For Fans Of:** Necrophagist, Whitechapel, Black Tongue



**2 IN DEATH**  
**GODZILLA**

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [facebook.com/indeath](https://facebook.com/indeath)

**For Fans Of:** All Shall Perish, Sepultura, Slipknot



**3 IN LEAGUE**  
**MOVING FOR WORDS**

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [facebook.com/inleague](https://facebook.com/inleague)

**For Fans Of:** Alexisonfire, The Color Morale, Emarosa



**4 BLACKENED ANGEL**  
**ALONE**

**Label:** Dominus

**Web:** [blackenedangel.net](https://blackenedangel.net)

**For Fans Of:** Kreator, Iced Earth, Lord



**5 AUTUMN'S DAWN**  
**GONE**

**Label:** Eisenwald Tonschmiede

**Web:** [facebook.com/autumnsdawnband](https://facebook.com/autumnsdawnband)

**For Fans Of:** Sentenced, Mono, The Cure



**6 CARBON BLACK**  
**BLOOD AND SACRIFICE**

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [carbonblack.net.au](https://carbonblack.net.au)

**For Fans Of:** Pantera, Anthrax, Alter Bridge



## 7 THE DEFIANT FEW

### MY CONFUSION

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [facebook.com/thedefiantfew](https://facebook.com/thedefiantfew)

**For Fans Of:** Alter Bridge, Stone Sour, Breaking Benjamin



## 8 FAULTLINES

### PARTING GIFTS

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [facebook.com/faultlinesmusic](https://facebook.com/faultlinesmusic)

**For Fans Of:** Trophy Eyes, The Amity Affliction, Periphery



## 9 THE DIRTY EIGHTS

### MYALL CREEK

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [facebook.com/thedirtyeights](https://facebook.com/thedirtyeights)

**For Fans Of:** The Bronx, Black Flag, Sick Of It All



## 10 IN THE EYES OF WOLVES

### NIGHT TERRORS

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [facebook.com/intheeyesofwolves](https://facebook.com/intheeyesofwolves)

**For Fans Of:** Parkway Drive, August Burns Red, Oceans Ate Alaska



## 11 KATABASIS

### PATH OF RUIN

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [facebook.com/katabasis](https://facebook.com/katabasis)

**For Fans Of:** Opeth, Soilwork, Meshuggah



## 12 ROOM 13

### ALL NIGHT

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [facebook.com/room13music](https://facebook.com/room13music)

**For Fans Of:** Mötley Crüe, Guns N' Roses, Henry Rollins



## 13 SCREAMING EAGLE

### DIAMONDS TO DUST

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [facebook.com/screamingeagleaus](https://facebook.com/screamingeagleaus)

**For Fans Of:** Slash, Cold Chisel, Lynyrd Skynyrd



## 14 STRICKUN

### OVERWHELMED

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [facebook.com/strickun](https://facebook.com/strickun)

**For Fans Of:** Pantera, Metallica, Tool



## 15 MOFOISDEAD

### SEMI DROP

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [mofoisdead.com](https://facebook.com/mofoisdead.com)

**For Fans Of:** Faith No More, Iron Maiden, Remy Zero



## 16 HELOTRY

### NEVER BACK DOWN

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [facebook.com/helotry](https://facebook.com/helotry)

**For Fans Of:** Machine Head, Pantera, Black Sabbath



## 17 QUAKE MACHINE

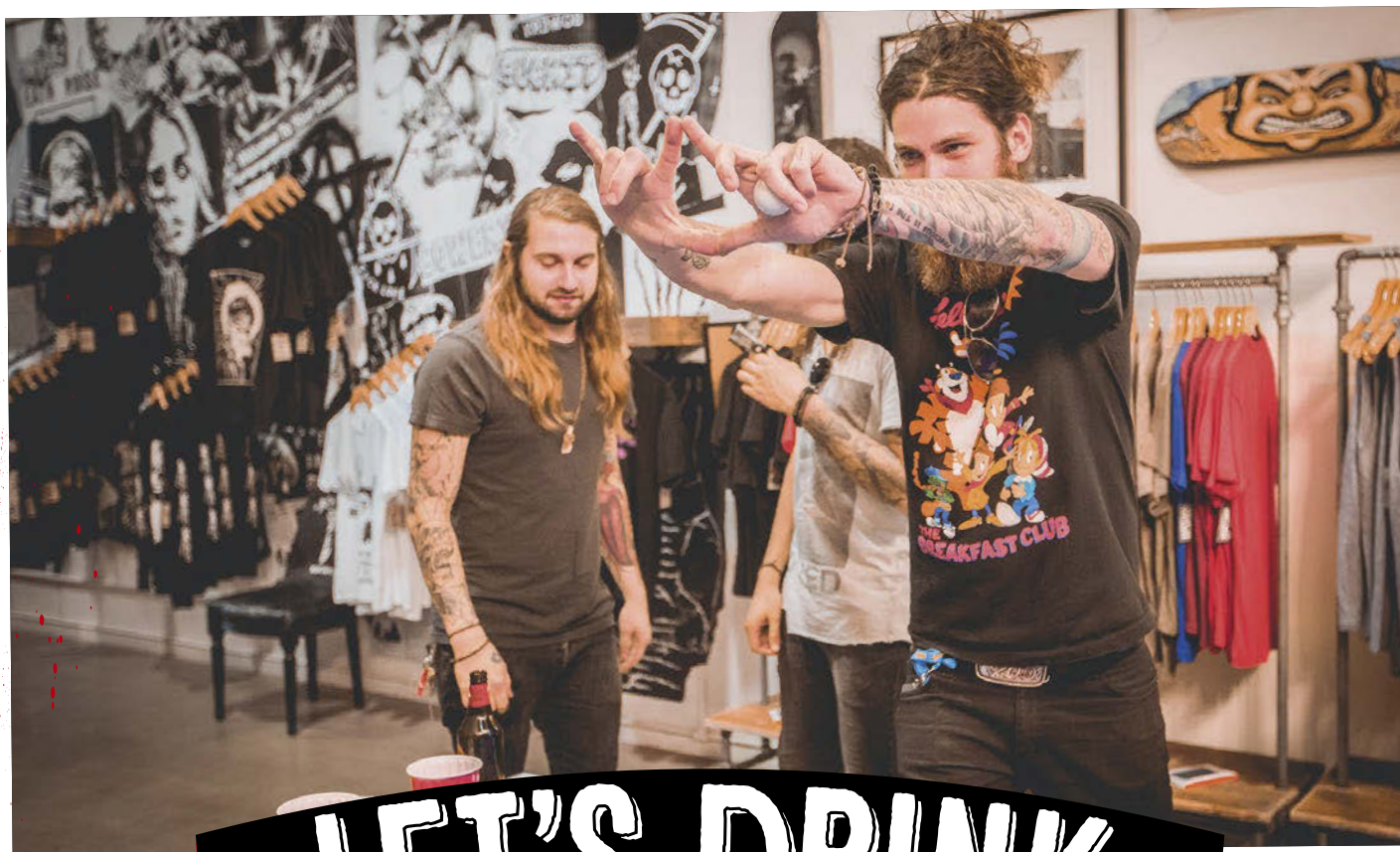
### WEB CITY

**Label:** Independent

**Web:** [facebook.com/quakemachine](https://facebook.com/quakemachine)

**For Fans Of:** Black Sabbath, Alice Cooper, Faith No More

# EUREKA REBELLION TRADING



## LET'S DRINK A BEER

**BLUNT's** at it again and this time we're destroying the livers of your favourite bands with an ol' fashioned game of beer pong.

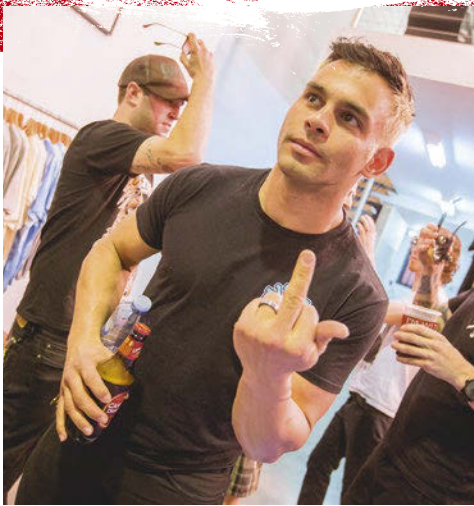
Words by Amy Simmons. Photos by Peter Zalugny.

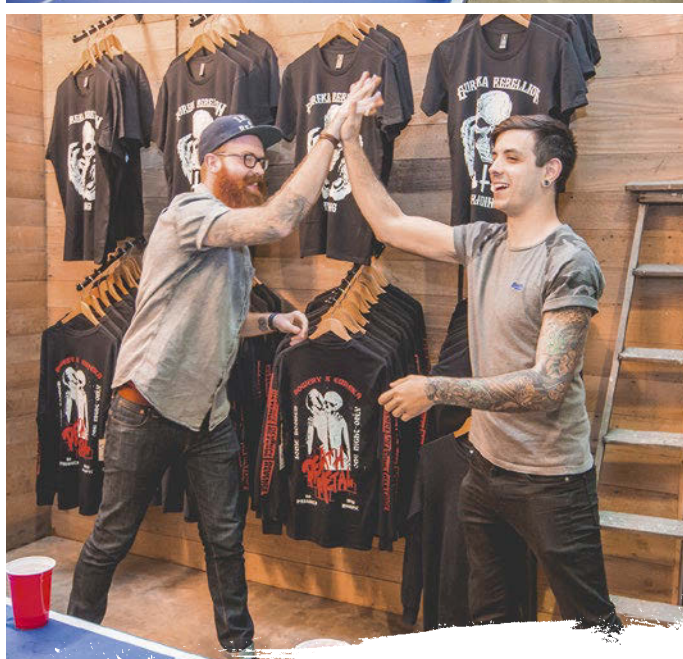
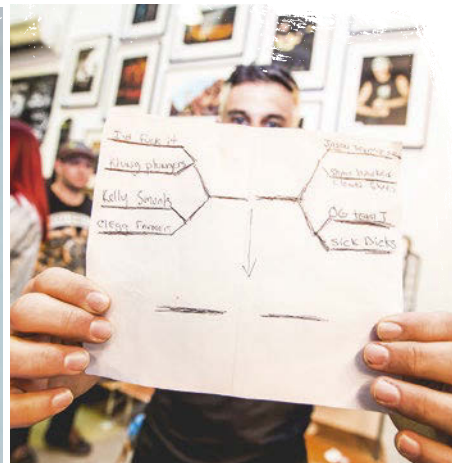
**W**hat do you do with a bunch of bands that have nothing to do the day after Soundwave? Round them up, shove them into the coolest store in Melbourne (that'd be Eureka Rebellion Trading), line their stomachs with pizza and then watch them battle it out for the most esteemed title of **BLUNT** Beer Pong World Champion. For those who have never played the most dudebro game to ever come out of the American frat system, beer pong is a game where two teams take turns shooting a ping pong ball into the other team's cups. If a ball lands in a cup, the opponent has to chug the contents i.e. beer. Readers with a keen eye will recall we played a version of this with Crossfaith back in issue #121. We even invented a brand new game called Jägerpong where we switched the beer for Jägerbombs because, let's face it, they have cast-iron livers that are immune to the light stuff. First up was Sleepwave VS Nothing More. Feeling a bit dusty from the night before, Nothing More could

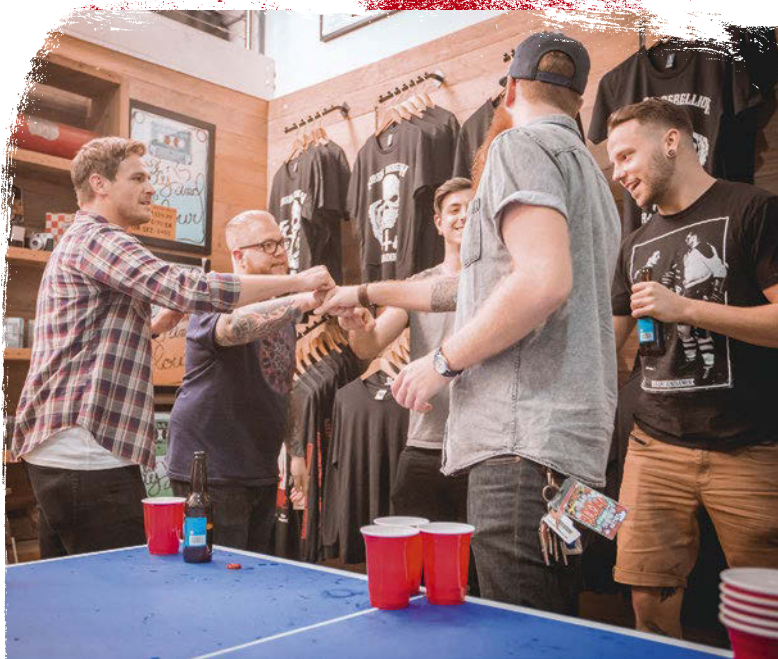
barely see straight let alone throw a tiny ball into a big red cup and Sleepwave sailed straight through to a first round victory with nearly all their cups still in play. Up next was Patent Pending VS The Color Morale. One thing you need to know about The Color Morale: they really, really love beer pong. And they take it very seriously. The day before the tournament, we found them huddled around a table mapping out their strategy for victory. These guys don't fuck around. Patent Pending didn't stand a chance. The grand final was Sleepwave VS The Color Morale: countrymen VS countrymen, player VS player, mate VS mate. Shit got real when it was agreed that the losing team would wear the winning band's merch onstage. Sleepwave came out swinging with their precision throwing skills putting The Color Morale on edge. With clear eyes, full hearts and lots of beer in their bellies, The Color Morale regrouped and came from behind to snatch victory and take out the title of **BLUNT** Beer Pong World Champions.

We'd say better luck next time, but we know The Color Morale are already in training to defend their title. **B**

A huge thank you goes out to the rad folks at Eureka Rebellion Trading for supplying the table/beer/pizza/tunes and good times. If you're ever in Melbourne and in search of a tattoo, haircut, vinyl, merch and generally cool shit, hit them up at 454 Smith St, Collingwood and tell 'em **BLUNT** sent ya.







A funny thing happened on the way to 2015. Over the course of 10, maybe 15 years, our relationship with the Internet seemed to progress from casual encounters to full-blown dependency. As smartphones found their way into our hands, our interactions changed, too; suddenly the world's most inaccessible figures – actors, politicians, athletes, rockstars – were only a tweet away. If you're in a band, it's an interesting climate to reside in. Post a new song, and you'll see your fans' reactions in real time – no matter how unwarranted their comments are. For Midwestern crew Citigen, that includes fans addressing them via their Facebook page to tell them that their new songs "have no identity" and that the fellas ought to "not promote or tour this album" as you "don't wanna market a bad product and commit band suicide". Really.

"Because of the internet and social networks, I think people have gotten really entitled in thinking that bands are supposed to aim to please," Nick Hamm considers of the modern band-and-fan relationship. "So somebody leaving a comment like that, as if our main priority was to make sure that they're specifically happy, is just kind of crazy to me. I think about when I was younger, and even now, if a band releases a song I don't like, you know, I don't post about it or especially post on their pages that I don't like it; it's weird to me that people leave comments giving us advice, 'cos it's kind of like if I were to come into their workplace and tell them how to do their job better. It's just crazy to me that people could be entitled enough to think that it's their place to give suggestions like that."

It's often true that songs cease to belong to the musician once they're released into the world; listeners attach themselves to what they hear and the songs take on a meaning all of their own. But it seems as though in this day and age, fans are attaching themselves to bands in a different way. There's an intense sense of ownership that's on display more than ever before, and a feeling of gratitude that's seemingly been lost in amongst tags, tweets and mentions.

"Every time a band announces a tour, there's always somebody complaining that it's not coming to their city," Hamm begins. "Me and my friends have always just travelled to go to shows; we don't live in a major city, so we had to go to Detroit or Cleveland or Chicago to see a show. So when I see kids being entitled enough to think that they should be kept in mind when coming up with tour routing, it's crazy. I think it's because they have Twitter at their fingertips; they think all of their desires and opinions are wanted. I don't know when the line is, but I think when bands reach a certain point where you have enough followers, people maybe think that you don't see [their comments] or it's not us using our Facebook or our Twitter, but it is. We see everything. I don't take it to heart or anything, because for every bad comment there's 10 good ones, but it's kinda insane how impersonal they think it is."

It's been a whirlwind few years for Citigen. Since their 2011 debut EP, *Young States*, the alt rock five-piece have been landing on people's radars the world over, with the buzz steadily building after the release of their melodic, emotionally charged full-length, *Youth*. When it came time for their first UK tour – a sold out affair, no less – several of the band's members found themselves boarding an aeroplane for the first time. Refreshingly, Citigen's

sound isn't readily able to be pigeonholed, with many a critic left scratching their head – the band have managed to collect genre tags as though they were scout badges, being filed under everything from pop-punk and emo, to grunge, indie rock and melodic hardcore. For Hamm, he's quick to address that Citigen have never been ones to rigidly define their sound.

"I feel like we'll never reach that; I don't know if we want to," the guitarist says. "I sort of feel like every record will be very much a different time and place and we'll just be onto what's next. We're constantly listening to new things and trying to expose ourselves to new things so I think that when we have two years or so between recordings, there's a lot of time to move onto something else and I think we always wanna keep things exciting and we don't want people to expect what we're gonna do."

"You know, when we release new songs, I'll look at what people are comparing us to and I feel like if you ask 10 people, they'll say 10 different things, which I think is really good. In terms of genres, people seem sort of desperate to place their finger on things and they end up using words that are so misused that they don't have any meaning. We're not really bothered by that because I think it leaves people open to being more surprised by what we're doing."

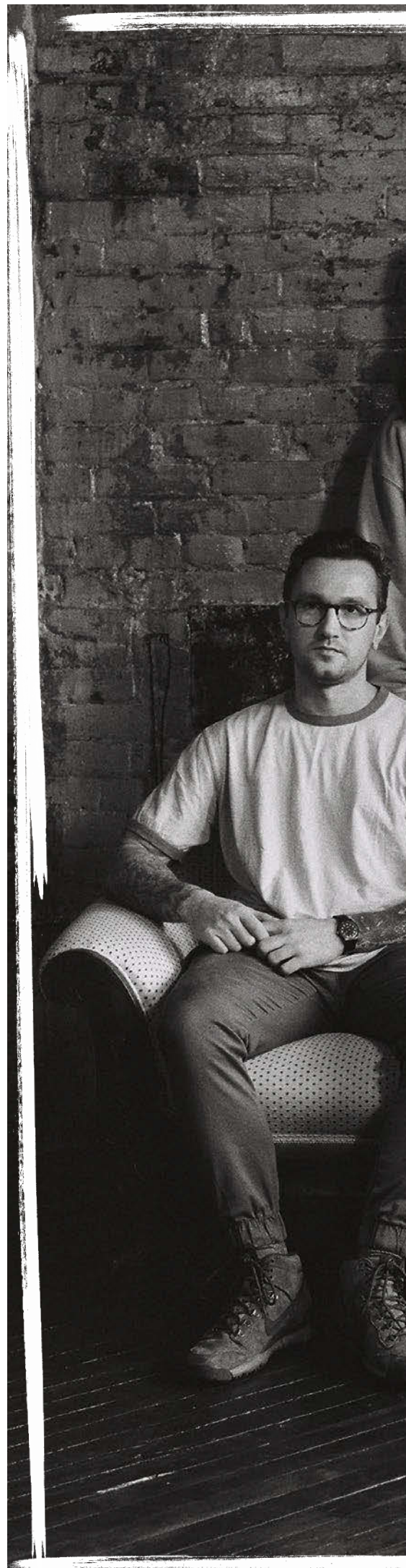
It's safe to say "surprise" is what most fans felt when the band delivered lead singles "Cement" and "Stain". Their latest disc, *Everybody Is Going To Heaven*, is a raw and menacing beast indeed. At times recalling former scene heavyweights Brand New, it's darker, more textured, and arguably the most gripping listening experience Citigen have ever offered up. With more focus on their musical output than ever before, Hamm agrees that the pressure was on to deliver with album number two.

"I feel like we were at the point where we could either take a turn that would give us longevity, or we could take a turn that would spiral us into being in one place and we obviously didn't wanna do that," he says of the band's sonic exploration. "There was definitely pressure to make a statement, to release something interesting enough that would set ourselves up for future records to just be able to do whatever we want to." Will Yip seems to have proved himself as a master of sound evolution, bringing the term "shoegaze" to the front of Title Fight fans' minds with his work on the band's latest disc, *Hyperview*. Having already worked with Citigen on *Youth*, it made perfect sense to enlist his services once more as the band explored new territory.

"Will is always down for anything; he's not some industry guy, he doesn't care if the record's gonna sell well or how it's gonna be received, he only cares about us doing what we wanna do and pushing the limits a little more. We felt ambitious, but he was definitely a coach in helping us execute it. We discussed that we didn't wanna hold back at all when we were doing this record and we didn't want to not do anything because of fear of how it would be received. We had that in mind the entire time making it and we tried any idea that was on the table to see what worked best." **B**



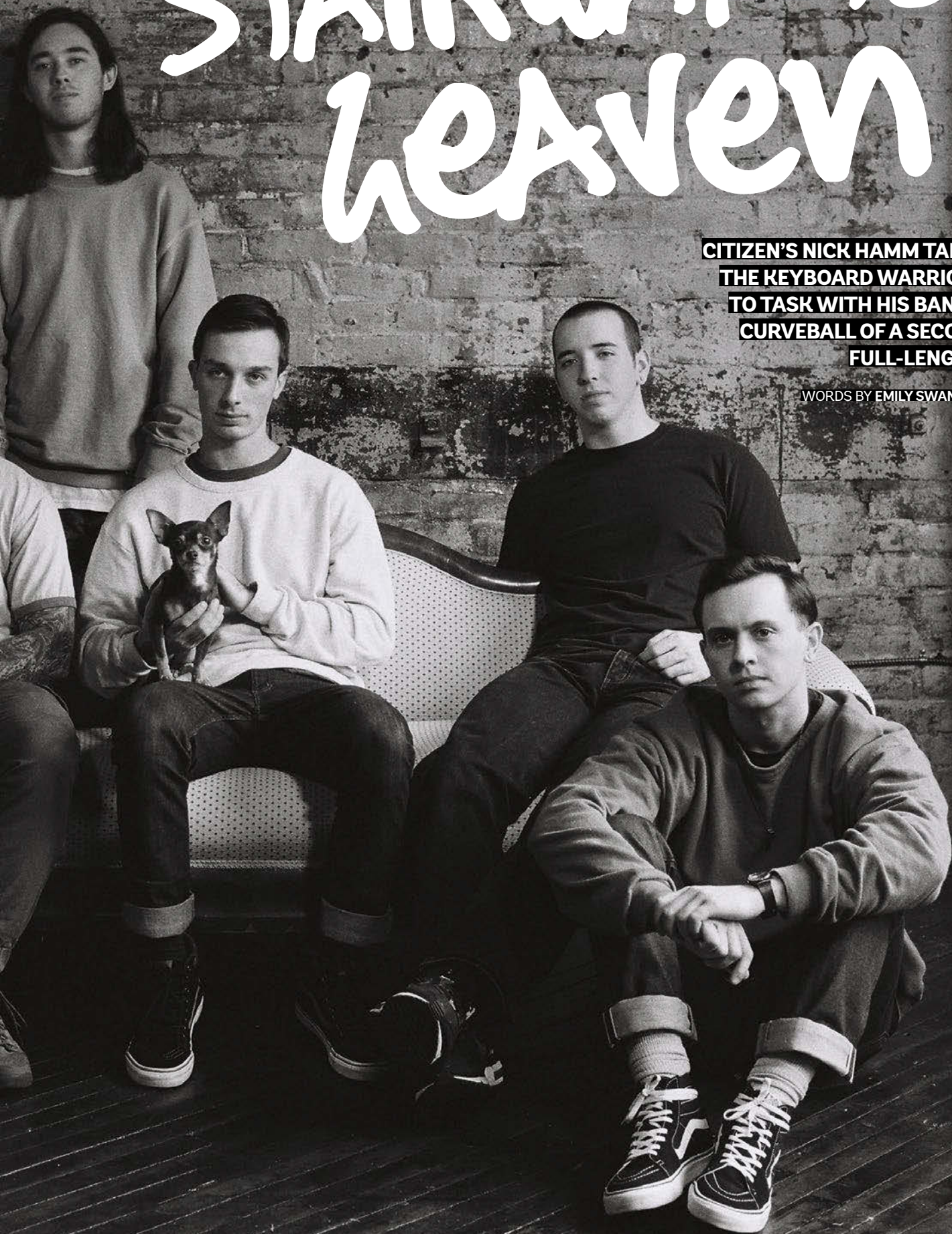
**EVERYBODY IS GOING TO HEAVEN**  
IS OUT NOW ON RUN FOR COVER/  
COOKING VINYL.



# STAIRWAY TO heaven

**CITIZEN'S NICK HAMM TAKES  
THE KEYBOARD WARRIORS  
TO TASK WITH HIS BAND'S  
CURVEBALL OF A SECOND  
FULL-LENGTH.**

WORDS BY EMILY SWANSON



# MUSE VS. MACHINE

**THE BOYS FROM BRITAIN HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR ROCK ROOTS AND RELEASED THE FIRST CONCEPT RECORD OF THEIR CAREERS. BUT A GLOBAL REVOLUTION ISN'T AT THE CORE ANYMORE, BECAUSE MUSE HAVE DISCOVERED A NEW MEANS OF TAKING DOWN THE DESTRUCTIVE FIGUREHEADS OF THIS WORLD.**

WORDS BY PETER ZALUZYNY.

**A**lright listen up everyone, the world is in a pretty terrible state right now thanks to a bunch of power-hungry arseholes who think the common man is their own personal plaything. But if we band together, we can take the bastards down and reclaim control! This mantra has been at the core of pretty much every record Muse have put out over the last decade, starting with the post-apocalyptic tones of *Absolution* in 2003, before rolling into political commentary and exploration of conspiracy theories on *Black Holes And Revelations* and *The Resistance*. Unification and a global uprising drove the storytelling behind most of their songs for years, but things have changed at Muse HQ. Their latest record, *Drones*, tackles similar issues, but turns the attention away from fighting these forces en masse towards an individualist philosophy.

"When I first found myself to be feeding that feeling of mistrust for people you thought were in trustworthy positions – governments, religious leaders and so on – my initial feeling was one of anger and frustration, with an avid desire to work out a way that those people could be taken down," says Matt Bellamy, singer, guitarist and one of the fastest talkers in the music industry. "In my younger years I probably had more thoughts that things or people can be toppled, but the reality is that all you can actually do is empower yourself to be immune to that, to take control of your own life and form a mind which is immune to their propaganda."

At first it almost sounds like Bellamy hit his mid-30s, looked back on his youth, then decided to abandon his inspirational narrative in pursuit of personal preservation – a pretty depressing thought after three albums' worth of revolutionary anthems. However, his

new outlook isn't quite as bleak as it seems, because even though the path to change may be different, the outcome Bellamy's hoping for is still exactly the same. "Think about it," he continues, "if half the military and half the religious extremists out there started thinking for themselves, the powers that be would have no pawns to play with."

It's a dark topic, darker than what we're used to hearing from Muse at least, that's also grounded in reality. Each day we encounter people who regurgitate easily digestible sound bites delivered by everyone from radio shock jocks to politicians and religious leaders. The vulnerable are often easily manipulated because they can't form an opinion or, more often than not, simply don't want to as it's easier to let others do the thinking for you. But when the influential figures decide that it's time to put their ideologies into effect, is their hand on the metaphorical or physical trigger?

Instead people fall into line and carry out the ground work without question. You can't blame a single person, group or entity for this, though there are plenty of people out there willing to take advantage of the situation, which is why *Drones* doesn't lay out any specific targets. A system that lets this kind of social manipulation run rampant is under examination here because the problem isn't who you follow, Bellamy says, but rather the fact that you're prepared to be led.

"If you look at the lyrical content it's more of an emotional journey of an individual," he explains. "You know military brainwashing and religious extremists, they're the two opposite sides of the coin that are battling each other at the moment. They're both trained to kill and do things without even questioning whether it's right or wrong, so it's [*Drones*] a comment on how futile that all is."





This emotional journey follows the path of an unnamed protagonist who's losing touch with their humanity, as their understanding of sensations such as love and empathy have crumbled. They're an ideal candidate for mental deconstruction and control, which is embodied in the opening song "Dead Inside". But as the character heads down this dark road, they rediscover their identity and from that, a burning desire for total independence from the system. So they fight back, and when the protagonist's mind breaks free from external influences, they re-enter the world with a clear understanding of the importance of autonomy, and an unstoppable drive to spread that message to others.

Or at least that's one of the stories within *Drones*. This positive version of events ends on a track called "Aftermath", which Bellamy sees as "kind of a love song, like rediscovering love again". But we know that life isn't always so kind as to deliver the happy ending that people often hope for, which is why Muse decided to explore the negative outcome of the protagonist's existence in a world populated by drones. Around the point of "The Handler", when the revolutionary sparks begin to ignite, the character either rediscovers their humanity, or skips ahead to the final two tracks called "The Globalist" and "Drones", where the conclusion is much darker. "Instead of becoming an underling they end up becoming a dictator type, a kind of crazed maniac,"

Bellamy explains. "The album ends on 'Drones' which is a mysterious little afterthought, a sombre note, like the ghosts of all the damage that's been done when humans do detach from their emotions and become psychopathic leaders, soldiers or religious extremists, whatever."

Each story has a clear beginning, middle and end, fitting the profile of a concept record, which is a first for the band and somewhat of an anomaly in an industry that's putting greater focus on hit singles instead of entire albums. It works, however, as the impact of the protagonist's story is much stronger when you join them on their raw emotional journey by listening to *Drones* from start to finish.

In order to complement the raw subject matter, Muse decided to ditch the refined comfort of a computer and return to their rock roots. It's not a full-blown throwback to *Showbiz* or *Origin Of Symmetry*, nor should it be, but there's more than enough hard stuff on *Drones* to quench the thirst of old-school fans, blended with their more recent explorations into soaring, operatic tones and electrifying synth-pop.

"Our last two albums we produced ourselves, and as you become producers you can't help but engage with computers and technology," says Bellamy, explaining why they wanted to step away from the sound of *The 2nd Law*. "I think we spent more time in the control room than we did in the live room, and even though we love the album because we did

things that were very experimental and changed the boundaries, it wasn't about three-piece rock anymore. It was about orchestral, electronic music, all sorts of stuff.

"We wanted to rely on playing our instruments and our ability to solve musical problems as a band rather than editing, programming and doing things inside a computer, and it relates to the concept," he adds. "I think this album is very much a return to a raw, more human kind of format."

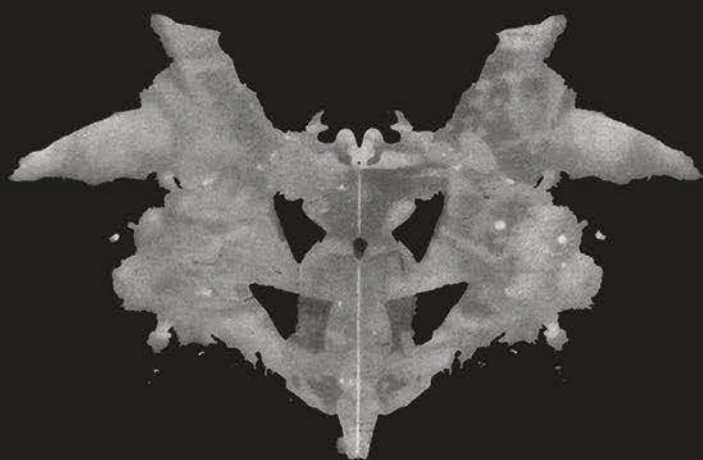
This raw subject matter can make *Drones* seem like something of a sad record, especially given the record's final note fingers on the negative outcome of the character's journey. But instead of taking home a defeatist message, the story should serve as a warning about the impact of dismissing our autonomy, and a means of inspiration for avoiding that kind of future.

"I guess if there was a message on the album it's simply that in certain points in our lives we all experience bad things. But we all have a choice to make and that's to detach from our humanity because some things are too painful, or to experience the humanity and regain control of your own life." **E**



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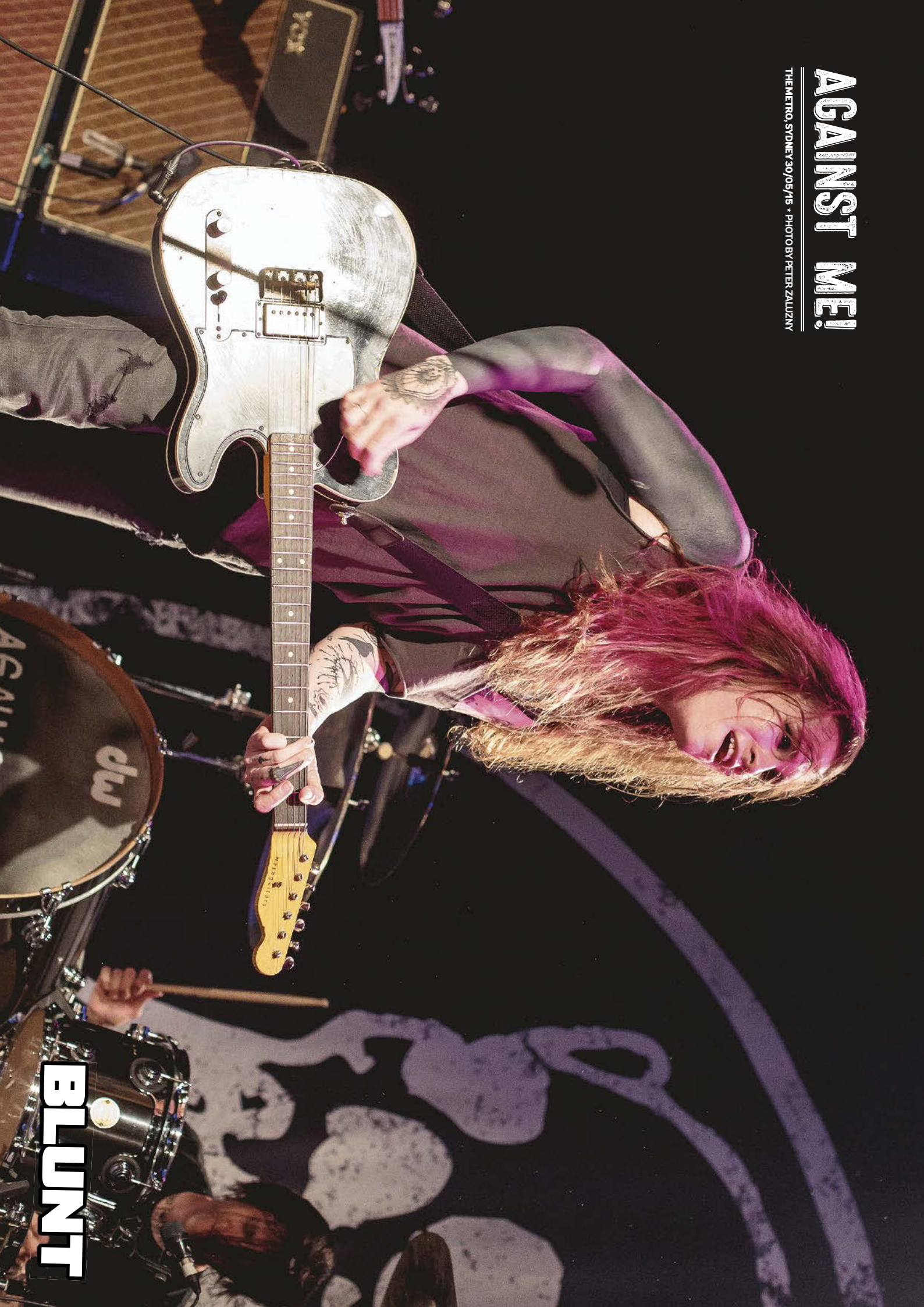
THE BALD FACED STAG, SYDNEY 04/06/15  
\* PHOTO BY SANDRA MARKOVIC



BLUNT

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# ROMANS WASN'T BUILT ONE DAY

MICHIGAN'S WE CAME AS ROMANS FILL US IN ON THE WHOPPING REALITY CHECK THAT CAME WITH ENLISTING STUDIO LEGEND DAVID BENEDETH TO RECORD THEIR UPCOMING SELF-TITLED LP.

WORDS BY DANIEL FURNARI.

There comes a time in the life of a certain number of today's Warped Tour staples when the aspiration of stepping up to arena-band level starts to look like it could become a reality. But such an ambition requires a musical leap of faith where the stakes and expectations are both higher. For We Came As Romans, this became very apparent in their first session for their upcoming self-titled album with multi-platinum rock and metal producer David Bendeth, famed for his work with Breaking Benjamin, Bring Me The Horizon, Paramore and Of Mice & Men to name a few.

"We went into this record thinking, 'We've got this down! We have like 15 songs to work with, this is gonna be sweet,'" chuckles Dave Stephens, the heavy half of the band's vocal department. "Then Bendeth comes in and tells us we can't write songs, we can't sing, we can't play our instruments... We showed him our best song, and he said, 'I don't know what I'm listening to. You better show me something to impress me because that was not it!' That first day was definitely the hardest day! But we went to Bendeth because we wanted someone to push us, and he knew that. So he was really hard on us, and he wouldn't let an okay song make the record."

Though Stephens assures us that the band and producer parted ways as close friends ("hugging and high-fiving, and we still text each other about hockey all the time!"), things understandably got a little tense in the studio as passions ran high. "I think every member of the band had at least one song that they got attached to and passionate about which eventually wound up getting scrapped completely. We'd have sat there in the studio from midday until midnight trying to

work on a song until we finally realised it wasn't gonna happen, which is a tough thing to deal with when you've put that much time in. But it was a great thing for our band and we know we're all better players and writers for it."

Bendeth's songwriting smackdown came as a surprise to the metalcore sextet, who had believed themselves to be more prepared than ever after having finally designated a period of off-tour time to write the record.

"We took almost half a year off to write this time," explains Kyle Pavone, the clean-singing counterpoint of the vocal duo. "We've never done that before with our other records – we would be touring and writing at the same time in the back of the bus. But this time we knuckled down and said we'd focus on this record and nothing else, and while we were doing it we would go to some different places, see different things and get different influences while we were writing."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this vagabond writing style had a similar effect on We Came As Romans as it did the Foo Fighters, resulting in the band having a bit of a "Sonic Highways" experience of their own, jokes Stephens.

"We travelled all over America – we wrote songs in Detroit, we wrote songs in Nashville, in LA, all over the place. And everywhere we went we had a different vibe; the little bunch of songs we wrote in a certain area would be similar to each other." It seems Stephens had the Foes on the brain in more ways than one – when asked what writing lessons the band took away, he responds:

"I believe Dave Grohl once said that you want your song's hook to be something that you could put on a bumper sticker, and I think it's much harder when you're feeling a novel of words to put that into one line. But a lot of the time, when it comes to lyrics, simplicity is better than writing a novel." Though We Came As Romans' positive lyrical message hasn't changed, there has been an obvious trajectory of musical growth through each record, with the more catchier, more straightforward song structures that dominate *Tracing Back Roots* and the upcoming self-titled record contrasting the busy and intricate tracks on their earlier records.

"In some of our favourite tracks from *Tracing Back Roots*, the structures of the verses and



# WE CAME AS ROMANS



choruses really changed up from *Understanding What We've Grown To Be*," explains Pavone. "We were tampering and toying with it then and it was something we really enjoyed on that record, so we decided to give it more of a shot."

Meanwhile Stephens' screamed vocals – while not absent – have become less of a focal point, and he now often shares clean vocal duties with Pavone in the band's more melodic tracks, a side he never displayed before. Stephens explains that though it's not exactly a new skill, it's one he's only recently begun to refine.

"In high school I was in choir and musicals, and I sang in a Christian pop-punk band, but I was never what you would call a professional, and I was definitely never able to manage both singing

and screaming – I would lose my voice doing one and not be able to do the other. So it took a lot of development to do both, and I had to do a lot of lessons to get better with my pitch, my timing and endurance."

Though many fans have praised the change while others have responded with mixed opinions, this all raises the question: are We Came As Romans trying to move away from being a heavy band? New single "The World I Used To Know", a hands-in-the-air ballad with no trace of screamed vocals, seems to suggest so, but Stephens is quick to assure long-term fans of the band's heavier side that the new record should have plenty for them too.

"I think the main reason for it is that we've just

been listening to and enjoying more melodic music at the moment. But I don't want people to get the wrong impression; 'The World I Used To Know' doesn't really represent the sound of the whole record. It's a good indication of one of the directions we're heading, but at the same time there's still a bunch of really heavy songs that are mostly screaming. It's not something we're scared to keep doing or something we don't like doing, but we love the melodic, rocky side as well and it's something we'll continue to pursue." **B**



**WE CAME AS ROMANS**  
IS OUT JULY 24 ON SPINEFARM/  
CAROLINE.

////////////////

BEING AS  
AN OCEAN



# LET THE OCEAN TAKE ME



**IN THEIR SHORT TENURE TOGETHER, BEING AS AN OCEAN HAVE SEEN MORE OF THE WORLD THAN MOST OF US WILL IN OUR LIFETIMES, AND IN TURN HAVE BECOME ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT BANDS IN THE SCENE TODAY. FRONTMAN JOEL QUARTUCCIO GETS BLUNT ACQUAINTED WITH ALBUM NUMBER THREE.**

WORDS BY AMY SIMMONS. PHOTO BY SANDRA MARKOVIC

It's not often you'll find Joel Quartuccio at home these days. Since forming in 2011, his band, Being As An Ocean, have become intimate with the highways of the world, pushing their melodic hardcore as far as they can to become one of the most talked about scene bands on the Internet. Enjoying a rare week off from touring, Quartuccio and the rest of Being As An Ocean are taking some time out to recharge before they get back in the van and set off for their very first stint on Warped Tour. Halfway through the run, the band will drop their third record. Simply titled *Being As An Ocean*, the album will be released a mere 14 months after *How We Both Wondrously Perish*, the quick turnaround forced upon them due to their heavy touring schedule and the desire to be released from their contract with their label, InVogue Records. Produced by Matthew McClellan at Glow In The Dark Studios and mastered by Kris Crummett, guitarist Tyler Ross composed Being As An Ocean with a festival audience in mind, while Quartuccio drew from his own and others people's experiences to pen the stories that complete the album. Turning someone else's reality into lyrics was a challenge for the frontman, who took the story of his pastor's abusive upbringing and channelled it into the lead single, "Little Richie". Even with all its challenges, Quartuccio firmly believes without the band, he wouldn't be the person he has grown into today.

**Tell us about your new album, *Being As An Ocean*.**

I think that this album is special because Tyler Ross, our guitarist, was able to really crack down and spend a good three weeks living with a good buddy of ours – his name is J.M. and he sings for a band called The Body Rampant – and he was a really cool, fresh sounding board for him and we got to include more friends on this album – another friend came from Tennessee and did a bunch of noise stuff on the album and it was really cool to see it all come together.

**Why opt for such a quick turnaround between your self-titled album and *How We Both Wondrously Perish*?**

It was forced upon us a little bit. We had a three album contract with our record label [InVogue Records] and we had been touring so extensively last year that it was kind of just finessing our schedule into working writing new music into it. We knew we wanted to have new music before that two-year mark, but obviously really had to schedule and spend time to write. It all kind of worked out the way it did and I'm actually really glad we did it.

**Why is that?**

Not only having the third album and having stretched ourselves and pressed ourselves as musicians, the freedom from the label is going to be awesome. To be able to work with someone who is fully invested in us, or be independent and do the things that labels get paid to do but don't really do efficiently or don't focus on what our band can do will be awesome.

**You mentioned that you had to check yourself to make sure you didn't write anything that's too 'out there', why did you impose such self-restraint on this one?**

I didn't want to do the stories I was trying to tell a disservice. I wanted to be an efficient storyteller where a real life event was involved and that was something extremely new to me, so I didn't want to take too many artistic liberties to make the stories ungraspable.

**Being As An Ocean fans really latch onto your lyrics, is there a message you're hoping people take away from the album?**

A big running theme throughout the entire album is forgiveness, not only for other people but for ourselves. Just allowing ourselves to be human and to make mistakes and have it be okay. To not make a life of shame for the things we've done wrong, but learning through forgiveness to adjust and learn to become better people. So if anyone listens to this album, I would hope that they took a kind of fresh aspect of forgiveness.

**Is there a song on this album that really resonates with you?**

One of them – it isn't part of a greater story, it's kind of a stand-alone song – the song is called "Forgetting Is Forgiving The I" and sometimes we trap ourselves in these mini hells of circular thinking and circular healthiness and sometimes the only thing to get us out of that is to learn to try and forgive what put us there. It's about taking responsibility for our part.

**How does it help you as a writer to take someone else's story and turn it into a song?**

I think it makes it more emotional because, at least for myself, I'm trying to imagine myself there, trying to imagine myself witnessing the things I've been told first-hand from the people who actually experienced them. Being able to try and empathise fully with that situation has made a profound emotional impact in my life – a spiritual impact as well. It's crazy that the stories, even though they were written and recorded a few months ago, they've come to me to grow since, just looking back on them. I think that's something that's pretty unique to me.

**Are these songs a vessel of catharsis for you?**

100 percent. I told all my friends this last night, if I didn't have this, if I didn't have this outlet, I'd probably be crazy. I'd probably just think far too much and be angry and all these different things. I definitely wouldn't be the person I am today without the words and without the live shows. **B**



**BEING AS AN OCEAN**  
**IS OUT NOW ON DOUBLE CROSS/  
COOKING VINYL.**

× FEATURE ×

REFUSED



THE HONEYMOON IS OVER, BABY – SWEDEN'S PUNK  
REVOLUTIONARIES ARE MAKING NEW NOISE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN  
OVER 15 YEARS; AND IT'S POISED TO BE THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL  
LP OF THE YEAR. **BLUNT** WENT ONE-ON-ONE WITH VOCALIST DENNIS  
LYXZÉN TO DISCUSS THE PAST AND PRESENT OF A BAND STILL DOING  
THINGS EXCLUSIVELY ON THEIR OWN TERMS.

WORDS BY DAVID JAMES YOUNG.

**A**fter 14 years in the grave, Refused wanted the airwaves back. And so it was: what was originally scheduled for a one-off run of shows exploded into a world tour taking up all of 2012 and ending up in Australia for some truly unforgettable shows. Just like that, the band were gone again... or were they? Last year, the band was resurrected a second time – a complete reboot, too, with the release of a new studio album imminent. Of course, there were compromises to be made and rules to be put in place – but it was entirely to do with making sure Refused were putting their minds toward the best possible record they could make. “We kept it a secret for a very long time,” begins Dennis Lyxzén, the band’s frontman and lyricist. “We didn’t want to make any compromises for the record. I think as soon as you start listening to other people’s expectations and input on what you are and what you represent, it’s hard to make your output pure. When the other guys approached me about making more Refused music, I was very hesitant. I wasn’t sure at first, and then they played me the riffs they’d been working on. I found it very interesting. There’s always something interesting about what happens when the four of us come together and start playing, but hearing what they’d come up with really made me want to get involved.” The resulting album is the band’s fifth, simply and succinctly titled *Freedom*. With veteran producer Nick Launay behind the boards, it’s an album that doesn’t fall into any given category properly, whether that’s in the broader spectrum or immediate specifics. It may well serve as a head-scratching release for some fans, but according to Lyxzén, *Freedom* fits into the history of the band more comprehensively than one would initially suspect.

electronically-tinged post-punk band INVSN. Even with his time away from the punk and hardcore scene, however, he notes that he has still kept his ear to the ground to see what’s going on.

“For me, growing up, punk rock was very much about the identity of the outsider,” says Lyxzén. “To be a person in punk rock meant to be an outcast. I’m not entirely sure that much is true anymore. If there’s one thing I noticed in my time away from Refused, it was seeing the cool guys be in hardcore bands. It wasn’t so much the freaks anymore. Of course, when I was growing up, there were maybe six punks in my entire city. Things were always bound to change.”

This much rings true as far as Refused are concerned, too: from drum programming and acoustic guitars to children’s choirs and digging time signatures, the band have very much taken a kitchen-sink approach to *Freedom*. Fans were divided and outspoken over lead single “Elektra”, even more so over its follow-up “Francafrigue”. Rather than let such a matter upset the band, however, Lyxzén welcomes the discourse.

“When you write and record something, you try not to think about the polarising effects it may have,” he says. “You have to get into a space where you define your history. The reason people might be upset may not have so much to do with ‘Elektra’, or any other song that we put out – it upsets people purely because Refused putting out new music is fucking with their idea of what Refused is. You can’t help that in a common sense. You have to write on the sole premise that you are going to like it.”

He continues by relating what the band does to where they came from and the community in which Refused initially thrived. At 41, Lyxzén has dedicated nearly the entirety of his life to music – and the reason

# GO SHAPES

“If you listen through the lineage of Refused, we never set our foot on solid ground,” he comments. “We were in a constant state of movement – you can see the pretty huge steps we made between albums. Even a record like [the band’s last LP, 1997’s *The Shape Of Punk To Come*], it’s a very eclectic record. It’s all over the place. That was when we were still active – I mean, imagine the change that comes some 17 years later. Not only are we all so different as people now, it’s also been a really long time since all of us were writing music together. We know what Refused is as an entity and as a band, so we were very conscious about making a new record. We were very cautious about the ideas we were putting forward. We definitely didn’t go into it thinking about doing everything differently than how we did it previously – for us, it was another Refused record. We didn’t have a conscious game plan beyond that.”

In the time away from Refused, the various members of the band have not been idle. Rather, they’ve busied themselves with a myriad of other projects. Lyxzén, in particular, has been a part of projects such as the rock’n’roll outfit The (International) Noise Conspiracy and the

he has stuck around is, for lack of a better term, not giving a fuck what anyone thinks about what he’s doing.

“Back in the ‘90s, I was very much part of a scene in Umeå, and I guess Sweden in general by means of proxy,” says Lyxzén. “When we put out ...*Punk To Come*, it was a conscious step away from that scene. It freed us up to make the kind of music that we wanted to make, without the idea of worrying about what they would think looming over. We’ve never worried about scenes or trends. We just want to make music.”

So, to paraphrase Kanye West: how much does Lyxzén not give a fuck? He closes with this: “I think *Freedom* is a great record. I think it’s way better than *The Shape Of Punk To Come*. I would love nothing more than for people to hear it with an open mind.” **B**



**FREEDOM**  
IS OUT NOW ON EPITAPH/WARNER.

## THE AMITY AFFLICTION

# LOOK MUM, I'M A STAR

**THE AMITY AFFLICTION'S AHREN STRINGER OPENS UP ABOUT THE FILMING OF THEIR FIRST FEATURE-LENGTH DOCUMENTARY SEEMS LIKE FOREVER, SHEDDING A TEAR OR TWO ON STAGE, AND WRITING A NEW ALBUM WITHOUT THEIR FOUNDING GUITARIST.**

WORDS BY LACHLAN MARKS. PHOTOS BY SANDRA MARKOVIC

**P**erched on his couch in Melbourne, The Amity Affliction's Ahren Stringer is enjoying his downtime watching a baseball game on TV, his beloved cat by his side. Having committed to a relentless touring schedule for a good solid decade, time off is rare and to be cherished. He's graciously taken a call from **BLUNT** HQ to talk about a new milestone in the band's career: a feature-length documentary entitled *Seems Like Forever*. While baseball takes precedence on his own small screen, he has watched the film and is proud of the final product.

"I'm a big documentary buff," he explains. "So it's cool being privy to what a documentary is supposed to look like and watching your own. It's kind of surreal and really fun. I always wanted to be one of those guys talking shit in a documentary and it finally happened!" Chronicling the entire history of their career, the film puts the band members on the spot for one-on-one interviews, reliving the ups and downs that have come with crafting four full-length releases, engaging in countless laps of Australia and building an international fanbase. Well, what they can remember of it anyways. "Being put on the spot I wasn't prepared for every question. They'd be like, 'Talk about what happened on this tour or that tour' and I couldn't remember anything that happened on those tours," he laughs. "We did it all one-on-one, which I think worked out good as well, because what I missed Joel [Birch, vocals] got. It was good to hear everyone else's perspectives of the events that happened."

One key player in The Amity Affliction story that doesn't front the camera in *Seems Like Forever* is long-serving guitarist Troy Brady. He departed the band last year after 11 years in the fold. For anyone that is familiar with the band, his omission from the documentary is at first quite glaring but Stringer stresses that it was not a case of the band writing him out of their history but a decision made by Brady himself.

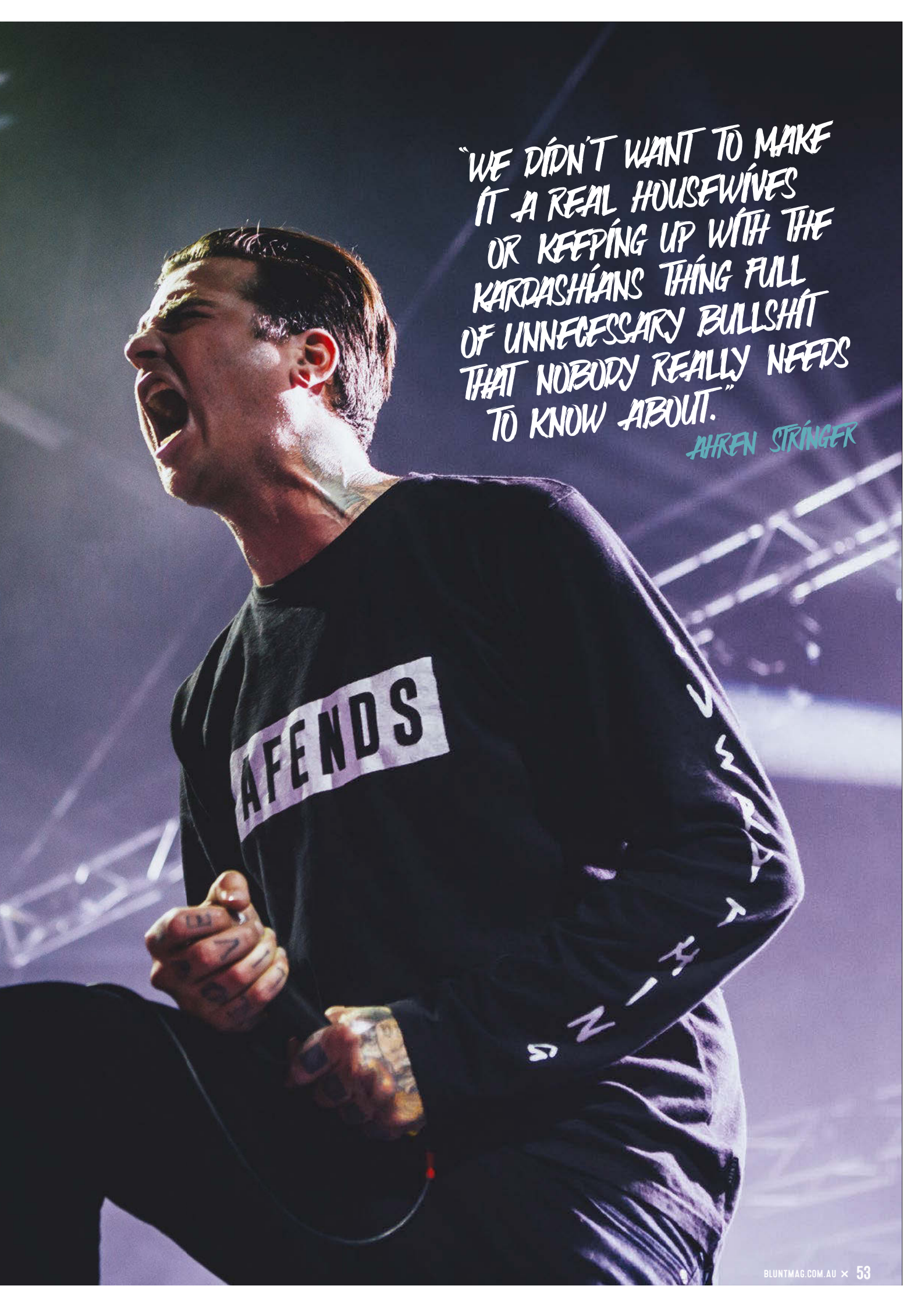
"We did ask him to be a part of the film and do an interview, but he declined our offer and just didn't want to be a part of it," he explains. "He actually wanted his face blurred out, but we didn't want to do that because we didn't want people to see it as bad blood or anything."

"I guess he's done with the Amity chapter of his life and just didn't want anything to do with it. We didn't want to erase him from the history of The Amity Affliction or anything. We didn't want to call him out; he's done nothing wrong. There's really no bad blood, it's just something he didn't want to be a part of, and that's that."

While they have a reputation for tackling heavier issues lyrically, inter-band drama is not something The Amity Affliction want to entertain. One of Stringer's hopes for the film is that it serves to set the record straight when it comes to rumours surrounding the band and provide a definitive history lesson for their legion of rabid fans.

"Everything I see on our Wikipedia page is complete garbage and I don't know where these kids make this shit up from. It's ridiculous. We didn't want to make it a *Real Housewives* or *Keeping Up With The Kardashians* thing full of unnecessary bullshit that nobody really needs to know about. It's basically a bunch of cool stuff that we've done, our basic history and a bunch of accomplishments wrapped up into one little package." While it's no *Some Kind Of Monster*-like experience in structure, there are plenty of emotional moments that play out in the film. The band's last Australian tour for *Let The Ocean Take Me* is a highlight. An enormous, vocal crowd literally braved a wild storm to welcome the band to Brisbane's Riverstage for the tour's final show in their home state.

"It brought me to tears on the last show," Stringer admits. "I tweeted that I was sorry I couldn't sing because I was literally brought to tears by the huge sing-along during the last chorus. I was just overwhelmed; it was this crazy feeling through my

A man with short dark hair and a beard is shown from the chest up, shouting with his mouth wide open. He is wearing a black t-shirt with the word 'DEFENDS' in white capital letters across the chest. He has tattoos on his hands and forearms. The background is dark with some structural elements visible, suggesting an indoor setting like a gym or a stage.

"WE DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE  
IT A REAL HOUSEWIVES  
OR KEEPING UP WITH THE  
KARDASHIANS THING FULL  
OF UNNECESSARY BULLSHIT  
THAT NOBODY REALLY NEEDS  
TO KNOW ABOUT."

AHREN STRINGER

entire body. So much adrenaline and emotions, and everyone felt the same. It was such a huge step up. It was just unbelievable.” Also braving the rain that night was singer Joel Birch’s mum, surprisingly experiencing an Amity Affliction gig for the very first time. “She’s not really into heavy music, and some of the older generation still can’t wrap their head around it, but she just didn’t understand how big we were until she saw that. It was great for him that he could say, ‘Look mum, this isn’t just some muck around band thing!’” “My parents weren’t there for that particular show, which I was kind of bummed out about; they were in Tasmania for my sister’s birthday, so they had to pick one or the other. I think it was a little upsetting for Joel that his mum and dad hadn’t come to any shows, but seeing him happy onstage with his mum was a very heart-warming moment.” The euphoria of that tour is slowly wearing off as their well-earned break comes to an end and they prepare to dedicate themselves to conquering the US market, joining the Warped Tour for a two-

month stint. Stringer is already mentally preparing for long hours on the bus. “It is looming over my head. The band got together on a group chat and we just want to go on tour now, and just get into it. It’s always in the back of your mind when it comes to the last couple of weeks of waiting.” “We want to be able to build our fanbase and play big, epic shows there. So we’ve been touring there relentlessly, really. This will be the fourth tour off the album, this Warped Tour, and then we’re going back in October – don’t know if you can print that, but I doubt anyone who’s going to read it will care. But yeah, we’re just really trying to get our foot in the door firmly in America and Europe and I’m busy writing a better album again.” The next album will be their first without founding member Brady contributing as guitarist and will follow *Let The Ocean Take Me*’s impressive #31 debut on the US Billboard charts. Despite the line-up changes and no doubt heightened expectations, Stringer insists their writing process will remain unchanged. “No, it’s pretty much the same as last time. Me

and Dan really wrote most of the music for *Let The Ocean Take Me*; we write well together and separately, so we’ve both written about five or six songs collectively. We’re just going to be writing on Warped Tour as well; we’ve got our own bus so we’re going to set up a back studio and write the whole tour. When we get back we’ll have another couple months off to write, and I think we’re planning on getting back into the studio early next year.” For now, *Seems Like Forever* acts as a showcase for a band whose career has only followed one trajectory: up. Should that change, there won’t be a sequel. “We don’t want to be that band that fades out and doesn’t take a hint; we don’t want to be that guy who lingers at the party for too long, not knowing our time to leave,” he laughs. “So if we do start to die or go on the fritz, we know how to show ourselves out.”



**SEEMS LIKE FOREVER**  
IS OUT JULY 10 THROUGH  
ROADRUNNER/WARNER.

“I COULDN’T SING BECAUSE  
I WAS LITERALLY BROUGHT  
TO TEARS BY THE HUGE  
SING-ALONG DURING THE  
LAST CHORUS.”  
AHREN STRINGER



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# INTO THE

LAMB OF GOD



# ESTORM

DESPITE THE UNFORTUNATE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH BEFELL HIM, LAMB OF GOD FRONTMAN RANDY BLYTHE DOESN'T PLAY THE "WHAT IF?" GAME. HE DOES WANT TO PERFORM IN OUTER SPACE THOUGH, **BLUNT** LEARNS.

WORDS BY BRENDAN CRABB.



It's useless for me to think in any way other than reality," Lamb Of God's vocalist Randy Blythe says regarding potentially pondering where he could be positioned – artistically, personally or financially – if it wasn't for his incarceration. "I don't engage in magical thinking – what if this had happened? What if that had happened? Who fucking cares – what happened, happened and I have to deal with what happened, and my band does, and we just have to do the best we can. I don't spend a lot of time wondering about alternate realities, because that doesn't do me any good right here, right now. I'm trying to make the most out of life, right this second, because as far as I know it's the only one I have." For those who haven't been keeping score at home, a recap. When we spoke to Lamb Of God in **BLUNT** #106, the heavy-hitters were

beginning a worldwide jaunt supporting 2012's *Resolution*. However, Czech authorities soon arrested Blythe on manslaughter charges. Fan Daniel Nosek died after hitting his head during a show in 2010; prosecutors claimed Blythe pushed Nosek after he rushed the stage. The frontman was placed in a dilapidated Prague prison before being tried and acquitted in 2013. The mentally and financially demanding case concluded, the Virginian metal mega-stars toured widely, and eventually worked to create new record *VII: Sturm und Drang* (German for "storm and stress"). Aside from being featured within the *As The Palaces Burn* documentary, Blythe subsequently sought additional methods to chronicle his Czech Republic tenure. *Dark Days: A Memoir* will be issued in July. He incorporated closed edition photographs of Prague, snapped while awaiting trial, in his inaugural photo exhibition – *D Randall Blythe: Show Me What You're Made Of*, which opened in May in New York.

through it and document it in a creative way, because that's what I know how to do. I'm a photographer, I'm a writer. I'm a songwriter; that's what I do. It's my life – it's like breathing to me," he laughs. "So no matter what I'm doing, I'm going to do something creative with it if the situation affects me... But it's not something that I want to draw from, because I think that would be disrespectful to the situation and for the people involved. I wrote a 500-page book about the whole experience. So when someone asks me, 'What was it like?' I'll say, 'You can read the book,'" he chuckles. "If you have any questions, there's a 500-page book you can buy at the bookstore. It will answer those, and many more you didn't even know you had." On the musical front, the growler emphasises that the new LP, featuring guest spots from Chino Moreno and Greg Puciato, is an authentic representation of the band as a whole. He praises its continuity, partially attributable to guitarists

things, it's a return to an old way of doing things. I think that really captures the essence of what Lamb Of God is about, not what individual players are about, better. I'm not knocking technology; I'm not knocking the songs they wrote or anything in that time. But for our band, I think on this record it really shows that those two guys were working a lot together and it sounds more like Lamb Of God to me than anything has in recent years." In spite of the quintet's considerable achievements – their new disc appears set to bolster said profile – perhaps Blythe is galvanised to further compensate for lost time by pursuing additional, unconventional and non-Lamb Of God-related ventures. He recently collaborated with Matthew Frain (apparently a major metalhead) from the Richmond Ballet on *Inventory*, creating an ambient score for the brief piece, staged at the city's dance festival. "I was really pretty nervous, because these people don't know who Lamb Of God is. This is the ballet world; they don't give a fuck," the singer laughs.

"I'M TRYING TO MAKE THE MOST  
OUT OF LIFE, BECAUSE AS FAR AS I  
KNOW IT'S THE ONLY ONE I HAVE."

RANDY BLYTHE

Blistering first single and album opener "Still Echoes" is a history of sorts of Pankrác Prison. Did he feel it necessary for the record's first taste to immediately address his imprisonment? "There's only two songs on the album that deal with that, and the lyrics to those songs are three years old. Normally when we come in to write a new album, I'll look through my notebooks and see what I have that I may have been working on during the past touring cycle or whatever. I'm not a guy that writes a ton of lyrics before the album, but I did have the song 'Still Echoes' almost completely written and I wrote that in prison. And I had maybe half of '512' written in prison. "I felt it was valid to use those songs, because they're real, and I write about real things that affect me deeply. But I'm not going to use that experience as some sort of creative well to draw songs from. I could, but I think a) it's disrespectful, and b) I'm not in a gangsta rap band; I'm not going to write a fucking prison album. That's ludicrous... It [opening the album] really had nothing to do with the lyrics; it's more about the song itself. It's a super fast, aggressive song and that's the way I like to start a record." Clearly such a strenuous experience elicited an internal struggle he's still grappling with, but as indicated, from a creative standpoint Blythe doesn't wish to continually channel it. "Artistically, yes, it's been done. For me, all of this stuff is coming out right now, but personally it's been done. I felt it was artistically valid to show those [photos], because I try and create real art, not some sort of fluff. No matter what my situation is in life, I'm going to try and work

Mark Morton and Willie Adler's refreshed writing dynamic. The tack recalls Lamb Of God's origins, Blythe noting they formed previous to the advent of the internet as it exists today, and "before everyone had a home computer that could do everything for you, much less a fucking iPhone". Blythe does applaud current technology democratising the process, but acknowledges possible pitfalls. "When you listen to the Burn The Priest record or [2000's] *New American Gospel*, the recordings weren't the greatest, but that was really us guys working it out, as a band. In today's age, I think that's becoming rarer and rarer. People record everything by themselves at home. Back in the day when we would get together to write an album and write songs, it would be five dudes in the practice space, and if you wanted to document these ideas you just needed a boom-box, a jam box with a tape, and it's five guys getting in there, working on music and pressing 'record' on a crappy tape. Trying to get a halfway decent recording of the song you're working on, so later you can remember your parts. And that's five guys in a room together. "I'm not in a solo project, I'm in Lamb Of God, and we are a band," he laughs. "For the last few records, I think that Mark and Willie, who write all the music, were tending to write complete compositions by themselves at home, and then when it's time to learn the stuff and come in to record the stuff, they'd come in and be like, 'Here's my six songs' or whatever. "[Producer] Josh [Wilbur] really encouraged them to come in and write together, and work on the songs together. So it's not so much a new way of doing

"They're just going to look at it and judge it based on the merits of the music, and my name really means nothing. It went over really well, and I had all these rich people who came to the ballet and they're like, 'Oh, you're the composer. Do you have an orchestra or studio here?' I'm like, 'No, I'm in a heavy metal band,'" he laughs again. "Matt and I are trying to get a budget together to actually do a music video version of it." The band may also have ambitious plans for the *VII...* touring cycle, as the frontman jokes about one-upping their former long-time touring buddies, Metallica. "We've played on just about every continent on Earth, except for Antarctica. Chris [Adler, drums] came up with this: I'd like to be the first band to play in outer space. We need to convince some rich dude to let us do a pay-per-view thing, and have us play in zero gravity on some private space shuttle. That would be fucking awesome. "Metallica, they're our friends and they played on Antarctica. I was like, 'Fuck, they did it'. I was hoping to be the first band to play on every continent. Although we did play China before them; I had a great time giving Lars [Ulrich] a hard time about that... But if we can be the first band to play in outer space, can you imagine that? That would be amazing. Nobody else would be able to say that. So that's my goal – astronaut, Lamb Of God, crew. Let's go." 



**VII: STURM UND DRANG**  
IS OUT JULY 24 THROUGH NUCLEAR  
BLAST.

LAMB  
OF GOD



NORTHLANE

# NO TIME



# TO WASTE

**ONLY HALF A YEAR ON FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF NORTHLANE'S NEW VOCALIST, THE INNOVATIVE SYDNEYSIDERS ARE BACK WITH THE THIRD INSTALLMENT IN THEIR CATALOGUE AND READY TO PROVE THAT THE ONLY WAY IS FORWARD. WELCOME TO NODE.**

WORDS BY **DANIEL FURNARI**. PHOTOS BY **KANE HIBBERD**

**Y**ou've gotta give these guys credit for their efficiency. Things tend to happen quickly in the Northlane camp, from their meteoric rise to international acclaim to the events of their last few months. Lose a vocalist, find a new one via online auditions, drop a new single, tour the world a bit and then smash out an album, all in just over half a year? No problem. But in a band constantly climbing to new heights, time is of the essence, which makes the choice of the song "Obelisk" as a single particularly poignant.

"There was this realisation that I think happens to everyone, and it happened to me about a year ago," says guitarist-turned-lyricist Josh Smith. "I'm 26 now, and I woke up and realised I'm not getting any younger and my time here is really limited and there are only so many things I'll be able to do with my life. You just have to accept that and realise that the only things you'll take to the grave are the memories in your head and the impact you've had on people here, and maybe that is more important than trying to define your success through things like material wealth or popularity. That's what 'Obelisk' is about. It can be a really unsettling thought if you dwell too heavily on it."

Fortunately Northlane's career has been built on a strike-while-the-iron-is-hot momentum. When we spoke to the intrepid Sydney heavyweights last October, they were on the verge of releasing "Rot", the first taste of new material to showcase frontman Marcus Bridge in his new element and hint at the new direction the band would be following on their third album, *Node*. From there the band jet-setted immediately to Europe where Bridge would undergo a baptism by fire.

"He was thrown in the deep end really bad there," laughs Smith. "His first ever show with Northlane was in front of 3,000 people at a Parkway Drive show in Sweden, and anyone would shit bricks when they're put in that situation but I actually think he handled it better than the rest of us."

"With every show we've seen him growing in confidence. It's like he's a different person on stage now, and I'm so excited for these headline tours we have coming up because I think he's really going to come into his own once he's singing the material he recorded and playing as a headline band does a lot to that aspect of you as a performer."

While the initial battle of finding the right guy for the job and getting him started in the band was behind them, a whole new set of challenges lay ahead for fellow axeman Jonathan Deiley, the band's main composer. With only a small handful of songs having been written before Bridge's debut, Deiley now faced the task of pulling together an album's worth of material in a few short months during which they were barely off the road.

Recording demos and ideas from the back of their tour bus as they rolled across the US and Europe, Deiley knuckled down into his work. Ideas were hashed out in New Jersey at The Machine Shop, where producer Will Putney – the man behind 2013's *Singularity* as well as countless other definitive modern metal records – was to record the album. But before the tracks could be laid down, more refinement was needed, and so Deiley entered his so-called "Anxiety Cave".

"It's this one room in the top half of the building where I basically lock myself in and get people to bring me food when necessary. I kind of just live up there until the album's done," he laughs. "It's basically me grinding away until something sticks, and then I bring it out and show it to the guys and see if they like it. We call it that because every time





"MARCUS WAS THROWN IN THE  
DEEP END REALLY BAD. HIS FIRST  
EVER SHOW WITH NORTHLANE  
WAS IN FRONT OF 3,000 PEOPLE."

JOSH SMITH  
NORTHLANE

I've been in there I've had to write several brand new songs. On *Singularity* it was actually four or five songs that needed to be written from scratch – those songs came really slowly and then quicker at the end. For this new album I at least had a bunch of riffs to go off, so the anxiety cave wasn't as anxious this time!"

As a one-man writing machine, Deiley is no stranger to writer's block, so we enquire as to his remedies: "Often when you write something you may not like it that much straight away – you may even hate it! But if you come back to it with a fresh pair of ears after a short break it can make all the difference. I can't even count the number of times I've hit a block and thought, 'I don't even know what this is, this sucks' and then I'll just come outside, have a drink and listen to it again and think, 'I know exactly what this needs'."

But while Deiley hacked away in his cave and Bridge grew accustomed to filling those big frontman shoes, Smith was busy dealing with a pressure of his own, and unlike Deiley's, his wasn't one he had faced before. Although he had volunteered early on to shoulder the weight of writing lyrics in Fitipaldes' absence, it took Smith some time to settle into the role.

"I never really felt comfortable doing it until I got into the studio and Putney started mentoring me through the process. It was something I had to force out at first and it was really difficult, but as time went by I fell into it and it became a lot easier and more enjoyable, even though it was something I'd found myself doing out of necessity.

"If you can imagine the kind of pressure Marcus was under, if we had said, 'You have to also write lyrics for this 11-song album', it would have been too much. We also like to play to our strengths as a band rather than thinking about what's 'equal', because equal isn't equal when everyone has different skills, and to get the best out of your band you have to play to your strengths."

With their legion of fans having attached themselves very strongly to Fitipaldes' thought-provoking lyrics – covering topics ranging from religion and political corruption to the exploration of the psyche – Smith knew that he had a responsibility to maintain Northlane's core message.

"I had to sit down with Adrian's lyrics and say, 'Well, this is what our band is about and this is what I have to work off' but what I wanted to do was to still achieve that while writing about topics that are more real-world, more accessible and relatable to anyone who's listening to it. I wanted to write stuff people can take their own meaning from and understand what I was trying to say to them," he explains.

"For example, 'Impulse' is the next single to come out after 'Obelisk', and it's a reflection on the digital age and what it's done to us as humans and as people. Despite having all this technology to connect us to other people, we're losing a lot of the personal relations that make us human, the face-to-face contact which we place less of a value on today. People tend to become someone they're not when they're behind a computer; it can impact their ability to socialise and it's fucking up our next generation."

With some careful guidance from their producer ("Putney has so much to do with how the vocals come together; if Marcus's parts hadn't been placed right it could have had a very different outcome," says Deiley) the band were able to ensure that the vocals showed just the right

amount of growth, taking advantage of the huge clean vocal range that Bridge is known for without sacrificing the screaming. It's clear the band are well assured in their selection.

"We couldn't believe how far he'd come even just since we did 'Rot' – we're so proud of him!" Smith enthuses. "I mean there's pretty much no Auto-Tune on the record! Once we got in the studio we felt so safe with that choice and excited about the future."

"It's funny, I don't mean this with any offence to Adrian, but I think in a way I always personally preferred listening to our music instrumentally in the past," adds Deiley, "but this time around for the first time I actually prefer it with the vocals over it!" While *Node* is without a doubt still a true Northlane record, there are some big differences to process, not just in the vocal department. In contrast to the more biting, highly digital guitar tones on their previous work, much warmer rhythm guitar sounds are abundant here, complementing the less frenetic riffs – a very deliberate move on Deiley's part.

"On this album I thought it was appropriate to go for maybe a bit more of a rock sound in the guitars, so they were dialled a little less aggressively. But to maintain the heaviness, there's a lot of layers and almost every part is quad tracked. I think we used six amps in total and we went through the album when it was written and decided which parts required a rockier or a heavier tone."

This all raises the question – is the band that in no small way helped to popularise the "djent" sound in Australia trying to actively shed that tag?

"Not consciously, but I never really thought we were that anyway," says Deiley. "I think we just got put into that box, so if we're veering away I'm not fussed. I just haven't really listened to a lot of those style of bands in quite a long time. When it was the big hyped thing I was listening to it more and that's why *Singularity* sounded the way it did, but on *Node* I was thinking more about the kind of bands that I was listening to when I was young and first picked up a guitar."

"That's why it's produced so raw," adds Smith.

"The norm these days is to have these crazy, overproduced drums that sound fake and they're all replaced, the guitars are all digital and perfect and that's not what a band sounds like. That sound is going to be dated, it's not going to be

relevant in five years' time, and if you want to make something timeless you can't write music that conforms to the sonic confines of a genre. It made it harder for us because the performances had to be better – there's no tricks."

But with evolution and change comes division. The loss of a key member, and a vocalist no less, can be too much for some fans. But having already braved the initial storm of the changeover, Northlane are fully prepared for the fact that *Node* may split their fanbase into different camps.

"I think that was always going to happen whether or not Adrian left," ponders Smith. "When you think about it, the progression from *Discoveries* to *Singularity* was a big one that alienated some people, but we're going to keep innovating our sound with each record and never stay put, so each time we release an album it will probably have that kind of effect for some people."

"Obviously with the fresh palate of Marcus's vocals to work with there is a bigger change than some people might be comfortable with. And if they don't like it, then that's okay too. They can keep listening to *Singularity* or *Discoveries* and I am still absolutely stoked that they like those albums. But I hope people listen to it with an open mind because it's something we're really proud of."

With everything that's happened to the band over the past year, it seems that everything has indeed finally come up Milhouse, and the outcome has been far better than anyone expected – least of all Northlane themselves.

"We didn't really have any expectations at all – at first we were just trying to hold things together!" says Smith. "We found ourselves in an unfortunate situation at the time but we also came to accept and realise it was one of the biggest opportunities we had ever had, because we had a chance to select a voice that could redefine where we wanted to take the band musically, so it was in some ways a blessing in disguise."

"We've always just done what we thought was best and just rolled with it, so there was never really an option B," concludes Deiley. "We just went full bore and hoped for the best, and here we are!" **B**

# "I ALWAYS PERSONALLY PREFERRED LISTENING TO OUR MUSIC INSTRUMENTALLY IN THE PAST."

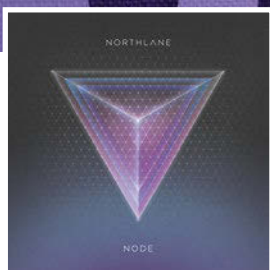
## JONATHAN DEILEY



### NODE

IS OUT JULY 24 THROUGH UNFD.





## NORTHLANE

**NODE**  
UNFD



It took about three full listens. Three listens of the album in its complete form to really get what Northlane were doing on *Node*. It's a grower, this one, but when it grows, boy does it grow. However, *Node* will no doubt be divisive amongst the die-hard fans of the Sydney quintet, whose heavier djent-mosh roots catapulted them to international acclaim. If 2013's *Singularity* was the son of *Discoveries*, then *Node* has to be the great-grand-nephew once-removed, and fans who've stuck with the band since the *Hollow Existence* EP-era will see that this is a different beast altogether. One might even go so far as to make comparisons to Bring Me The Horizon – not for the music itself, but for the fact that their sound continues to evolve by leaps and bounds with each record. This might not be their *Sempiternal*, but it might well be their *There Is A Hell...*, the one that sees them taking brave steps into new territory as they test the boundaries of their compositional capabilities. Influences that were previously much less overt, such as Underoath, Karnivoöl, Tesseract and Linkin Park, seem to take on a much more prominent position in *Node*'s sonic catalogue, all put through

the Northlane blender. It's a refreshing mix with just the right hint of familiarity. After years of writing and performing on downtuned guitars, the band display a more refined knowledge of how to (and more importantly, how not to) make use of the range and tonality of their instruments. The hard-edged guitar sounds of the past have been replaced with slightly warmer tones and more prominent bass – less aggressive yet somehow just as effective.

It's difficult to identify universal standout tracks as different moments will no doubt appeal to different ears. "Obelisk" opens with a mosquito-drone of guitar harmonics that grows into a crushing groove; the opening chorus of "Animate" is uplifting and unforgettable; "Leech" begins calmly and builds to a devastating machine-gun breakdown with just the right amount of space between its panned chugs – one of the few classic mosh moments on a record much more focused on atmosphere, feeling, and depth than on sating their crowd's penchant for pitting. But no matter how much Northlane have evolved instrumentally, it was always inevitable that the

vocals would be the most heavily scrutinised part of *Node*, with brand new frontman Marcus Bridge facing the unenviable pressure of stepping into the shoes of original vocalist Adrian Fitipaldes. And while of course we can't speak for everyone, Bridge gets an A+ from us. His soaring clean vocals, at times richly layered in harmony or left tastefully unadorned, are showcased in full, demonstrating a knack for expressive subtlety and control, and his coarse screams – while perhaps not as heavy as Fitipaldes' lower roars – cut confidently through the mix like a knife. This is an album that simply could not have existed in the band's previous incarnation – Bridge's voice is the perfect complement to their new direction and while *Node* may not please every Northlane fan, the potential to reach a whole new audience is astronomical, and this record stands as proof that it will take a hell of a lot more than a change of frontman to derail their creative force. Northlane are thinking so much bigger than what is expected of them, and in the process rendering futile any attempts to pigeonhole them. Hats off, gentlemen.

DANIEL FURNARI

### ESSENTIAL TRACK

"Leech"  
Climbs from a serene opening to a crushing midsection – a perfect transition from old to new.

## ROLO TOMASSI

### Grievances

Holy Roar/Shock



Eva and James Spence have spent the last couple of years reinventing Rolo Tomassi – from both a literal and creative standpoint. Three new members have entered the fold over the last few years, with this album serving as the debut release for the current line-up. The winds of change are rustling through far more than just those playing the instruments, too – the band's fourth album is one that explores the most gentle, lilting moments they have ever committed to record (the beautiful one-two of "Phantoms" and "Opalescent") as well as some of the most unforgiving and savage passages (the sprawling "Funereal"). The end product is a confident answer to the conundrum of how an already-unclassifiable band is able to shift form. *Grievances* is their best to date because it's everything that Rolo Tomassi can be.

DAVID JAMES YOUNG

## CRADLE OF FILTH

### Hammer Of The Witches

Nuclear Blast



We'll award Cradle Of Filth points for perseverance. Sidestepping enough personnel changes to eradicate five bands, the Poms still voraciously explore the macabre. Classic metal influences, perhaps most pronounced recently on 2006's *Thornography* are more prominent, thanks to the new twin-guitar attack amid the gothic grandeur. Dani Filth's banshee shrieks and howls mimic the centuries-old screams of witches being punished, but the twist is re-writing history as the persecutors receive their comeuppance. This is counterpunching by recent efforts' grisly, harsher textures, via the orchestral overture of "Walpurgis Eve" and the violent "Yours Immortally". The track-listing could have been culled, but fresh blood has revitalised somewhat, meaning when the hammer does come down, it resonates.

BRENDAN CRABB

## THE VACCINES

### English Graffiti

Sony



Once labelled yet another saviour of indie, The Vaccines's journey as a run-of-the-mill guitar band gets back on track with their third album *English Graffiti*, as the promise shown by their subtle but excellent 2013 *Melody Calling* EP fails to be fully realised. From the abrasive opening and yelped vocals of "Handsomeness" to the stomp of "Dream Lover" and the Vampire Weekend-lite "20/20", too much of this album does nothing that they (and dozens of other bands) haven't done before. Which is annoying when it has promising moments. "Denial" features trashy guitars and a reasonable falsetto from Justin Young, while "Want You So Bad" and "Maybe I Could Hold You" float by in a nice haze of plonky guitars and "(All Afternoon) In Love" is Lennon-y enough to enjoy. C – Must try harder.

TIM MARKLEW

## BREAKING BENJAMIN

### Dark Before Dawn

Universal/Hollywood



We give bands like Breaking Benjamin a lot of stick here at **BLUNT** HQ, and for good reason. So earnest and serious while basically carrying on like Juggalos with guitars, it's lowest common denominator drop D butt rock for dead shits. Snobbery aside, Breaking Benjamin are quite adept at merging the corpse of major label '90s grunge with the base elements of nu metal and a big ol' chorus with nonsensical lyrics. *Dark Before Dawn* is the band's first post-hiatus release and sees Benjamin Burnley (yes, the singer's name is actually Benjamin...) and four hired guns taking absolutely no risks and retreading the sound of their last few records, so fans scared of change will love this. If Staind and Godsmack float your boat, check it out. Didn't the UN outlaw naming songs "Breaking The Silence" last decade?

SARAH O'CONNOR

## BAD COP/BAD COP

### Not Sorry

Fat Wreck Chords



Do you remember the '90s? Bad Cop/Bad Cop do, so they've made an album that'd be right at home in the Walkman of *10 Things I Hate About You's* Kat Stratford – an incredibly upbeat throwback to the girl-fronted bubblegum punk of yesteryear. *Not Sorry* is an incredibly fun album; you'll find yourself humming along to the infectious choruses of "Nightmare" and "Here's To You", while tapping your feet like crazy to the classic Fat Wreck sound on tracks like "Old Dogs" and "Sugarcane". The album does suffer from the pop-punk curse of sounding a bit too samey at times, but the band's unwavering positivity keeps it from dragging on. In a time where the '90s are viewed through fetishistic rose-tinted glasses, the Cali four-piece have managed to reach an even combo of nostalgia while maintaining their own unique voice.

CHRIS NEILL

## TREMONTI

### Cauterize

FRET12



Mark Tremonti may have found fame as the guitarist for Creed but it's with Alter Bridge that he gets to stretch out with some serious heavy rock playing. You would think that freedom would limit where he might go as a solo artist, but Tremonti's debut and especially this follow-up find the guitarist exploring speed metal rhythms and Shrapnel Records-style shred. It's an addictive, adrenaline-charged sound but it's hard to pin down because the post-Hetfield aggression is too severe for rock radio and the melody too strong for the metal underground. The balance is perfect on "Arm Yourself", "Cauterize" and "Another Heart", but some tracks could use more focus in one direction or the other. Keep an ear tuned to the dark, Justin Chancellor-esque contributions of bassist Wolfgang Van Halen.

PETER HODGSON

## JARROD ALONGE

### Beating a Dead Horse

Independent



We've long been fans of the comedic offerings of viral YouTube comedian Jarrod Alonge, and the time has finally come to enjoy his magnum opus. Featuring Alonge's fictional but all too close to the bone parody bands – Vermicide Violence, Canadian Softball, Sunrise Skater Kids, Amidst The Grave's Demons and more – *Beating A Dead Horse* brilliantly lampoons almost every genre cliché and lyrical trend imaginable from the modern scene. From the intergalactic, over-intellectualising djent of Rectangles' "Cosmic Metaphysical Versimilitude" to spoken-word emo outfit Canadian Softball with their track "The Distance Between You And Me Is Longer Than The Name Of This Song", this is a great yarn if you're game to laugh at yourself.

DANIEL FURNARI

## HIGH TENSION

### Bully

Double Cross/Cooking Vinyl



Just about a minute into the opening title track of High Tension's second album *Bully*, low-end disgruntled muttering turns into an acidic screech, then two are doubled, and after a time the muttering emerges from the cacophony, briefly discernible: it's fucking dog shit – and you remember somehow this band's debut got nominated for an ARIA and smile, not because it was undeserving, but because they were stupidly heavy then, and heavier and more abrasive now. It continues in much the same way, a confronting level of aggression tempered by pop production, with other standouts including "Lapindo", the superbly titled "Killed By Life", "Static Scenes", and closer "What's Left". *Bully* sits perfectly between the definitions of it as a noun and an adjective: using strength to intimidate and a very good; excellent.

DAVE DRAYTON

# BLUNT READER'S TOP 5

SHANNON  
RYAN-JONES



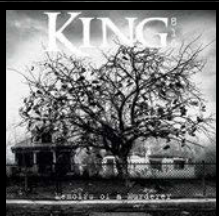
MY CHEMICAL  
ROMANCE  
The Black Parade



THY ART IS  
MURDER  
Hate



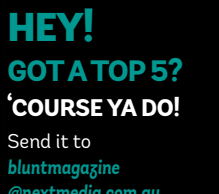
BRING ME THE  
HORIZON  
There Is a Hell...



KING 810  
Memoirs Of A  
Murderer



SWORN IN  
The Death Card



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## GLASS OCEAN II

Independent



There's some incredible grooves to be found in the second EP from this Sydney act, but you'll need to get past the almost caricatured baritone vocals, arriving straight from the dark pop of the '80s, that fall like bellowed bedroom talk, aiming for sexy and landing somewhere in the territory of being uncomfortably too sincere. A technical influence from the big sounding heavy-hitters – Tool or the likes of Karnivool – is balanced with a nuanced use of more jazz and funk-inspired elements. Despite clear talent, the band land themselves in similar territory to Phish; it's excellently executed, and by no means bad, but that doesn't necessarily make it listenable when not the soundtrack to the kind of intergalactic exploration you do in the spare room in your parents' house.

DAVE DRAYTON



## AURAS Crestfallen

Halfcut/Shock



With eight-string guitars buh-bowing all over the shop, a common question leveled at really heavy bands is: 'Why bother with a bass player?' Congratulations then, to Canadian prog metal dudes Auras for completely doing away with that extraneous instrument. And as expected, it doesn't hurt them a single bit. Occupying a similar niche as Veil Of Maya and Periphery with jazzy flourishes, skittering rhythms and the dreaded D word butting heads with heavy chugging, low growls and a constant china cymbal being beaten into submission, *Crestfallen* sure isn't reinventing the wheel. "Terrene" and "Inordinate" do the best job of including interesting melodies into the maelstrom to break up the barrage, as Auras spend most of the EP's run time stuck in first gear, which wears on the listener. The melodic vocals that see out "Boundless" are a nice, if obvious, touch.

SARAH O'CONNOR



## FIZZY BLOOD Feast

DMF Digital



In their short time together as a band, Fizzy Blood have supported punk legends Dead Kennedys, received enthusiastic airplay from the BBC and *Kerrang!* and played a headline tour in their native UK. Their debut EP opens with the almost five-minute "Black Sheep", which balances a number of different genres, from the moody guitar intro to the almost glam-rock beat of the verses. "January Sun" has an interesting sound in its verses before its screamed chorus stumbles into 30 Seconds To Mars territory, as does "Cue To Leave". It all seems so familiar, whether that's because it sounds accomplished (with a QOTSA swagger) or because it's trite ("Patience" has been made for a post-Royal Blood world; "Queen Of Hearts" channels You Me At Six) will probably be dependent on your taste and opinion on the possibility of originality in music in the 21st century.

TIM MARKLEW



## MATT SKIBA AND THE SEKRETS Kuts

Superball Music



*Kuts* is mellower than the debut *Sekrets* album and more eager to advertise Matt Skiba's love of The Cure. Hunter Burgan (AFI) and Jarrod Alexander (MCR) return, and – bar Burgan's superb bassline in "She Said" – seldom get to stand out. And there are, of course, giant choruses in abundance (e.g. "Krazy" and "She Wolf"). Lyrically, it's stock Skiba, and will appeal to those who are deeply moved by Stephanie Meyer books. Naturally, there are similarities with Alkaline Trio, but – more than for anything else Skiba's done – there's a strong Cure vibe. It's the frontman-playing-an-acoustic-guitar-to-mopey-rock-songs thing, and it's the synths. "Krashing" (yes, the Ks for Cs shat us too) keyboard drone in particular made us think of Lol Tolhurst. Not bad.

BRENT BALINSKI



## THE PRETTY LITTLES Gospel

Independent



Is saying that a slacker rock album doesn't try hard enough a compliment or an insult? Either way, *Gospel* is an underachievement for a band that can definitely do much better. Half of the album is a collection of incredibly solid and polished tracks (as polished as lo-fi rock can be, that is); "Dangerman", "Ava" and "Man Baby" are all catchy-as-fuck indie rock – the guest vocals on the latter are an extremely nice touch. "Local Footy" takes a much slower and softer route, whose Mountain Goats-esque loose-narrative lyrics are bound to hit close to home for some listeners – anyone who played football as a kid knows the line "You'll be right, mate" all too well. The rest of the album feels comparatively weaker. The ideas are there, but they feel half-baked and lost within an aesthetic of indifference.

CHRIS NEILL



## THE GETAWAY PLAN Dark Horses

Independent



10 years and three albums in, The Getaway Plan of 2015 are a very different beast to the band we once knew. The most striking aspect of *Dark Horses* is just how much the band have tried to expand their sound; in fact, most of the record's second half approaches everything with a much softer, proggy touch. The strings and piano of the seven-minutes-plus "Baby Bird Effigy", ballad "Last Words", the eight-minute, Jeff Buckley-channelling "Dreamer Parallels", slow-burning closer "Exodus" and bigarrily poppy "Last Words" are a marked change from the mix of metal and hardcore The Getaway Plan made their bones with. More classic fare emerges on "Battleships" and "Castles In The Air" – including Auto-tune (!?) – but you have to wonder, considering the record's crowdfunded genesis, if financial-backing fans will be pleased with the evolution.

JAYMZ CLEMENTS



## HELLOWEEN My God-Given Right

Nuclear Blast



This brand of power metal isn't particularly renowned for innovation nowadays; actually, much of the charm is derived from its self-referential nature. Typically, success record to record hinges on how many anthemic moments are provided that you won't be able to shift from your cerebral cortex. The listener will locate a respectable amount of '80s-esque hook-lines, although Helloween struggle to sustain an hour-long running time here. The rollicking speed-metal of "Battle's Won" and the enormous "Creatures In Heaven" will be a blast live. Uninspired arrangements and bland balladeering do let the side down, though. The German forebears possess the right to be afforded legendary status, but their latest is too pedestrian, forgettable even, to be a highlight of their deep catalogue.

BRENDAN CRABB



## WE NEVER LEARNED TO LIVE

**Silently, I Threw Them Skyward**

Holy Roar/Shock



As on their three-track, but near half-hour long self-titled debut EP, things aren't rushed on this UK band's debut full-length, the appropriately long-titled *Silently, I Threw Them Skyward*. Crushing, emotive, confident and expansive – each moment, each movement is so consuming that you forget over and over again what else it is they are capable of, so that each shift, most of them monstrous, feels like the first time the band have plunged you into technically impressive and eerie depths or soaring skramz-inspired moments of explosive catharsis. It's all on display on closer "Tasting Paralysis", an eight-minute epic seeming capable, just, of containing the diverse post-rock inspired deluge *We Never Learned To Live* are capable of creating.

DAVE DRAYTON

## LAMB OF GOD

**VII: Strum Und Drang**

Nuclear Blast



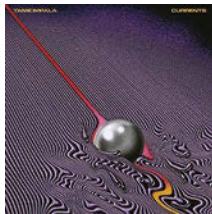
What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger, right? To say the past couple of years have been turbulent times in the Lamb Of God camp is a serious understatement. Having made it out of a Czech prison where he was held on, and later acquitted of, manslaughter charges, frontman Randy Blythe has a wealth of material to draw from (much of which has ended up in a hefty 500-page tome), which is a considerable change if you've ever seen documentary footage where he's struggling to pen lyrics. Vocally and lyrically, it's a complex and engaging album; as for the band, it's the same hearty meat-and-potatoes groove metal we've come to love, perhaps just a little hookier and focused. Combined, this makes for the best hunk of LOG since 2006's *Sacrament*. Prepare for your bangover now.

ED LAMINGTON

## TAME IMPALA

**Currents**

Universal



Tame Impala are in an enviable position. Off the back of two beloved albums, they've bought themselves the freedom to experiment without falling out of critical favour. Pretty neat, eh? No doubt to some fans' dismay Kevin Parker has cast aside the fugged-out '60s guitar tones to delve into funky '80s synths. Speed up "Cause I'm A Man" and you'll think you've stumbled upon a long-lost Michael Jackson rarity, while the swirling "Let It Happen" – just shy of eight minutes – is a trippy, synth-laden epic. The frontman (and Tame Impala everyman, really) has said that *Currents* is more in line with the music he's always wanted to make, and it's a progression that makes absolute sense. It lacks that certain punch, but look; it's best not to overthink it. Just let Kevin Parker take you by the hand and drift away.

EMILY SWANSON

## WOLF ALICE

**My Love Is Cool**

Sony



The eagerly anticipated debut album from Wolf Alice, one of the UK's brightest young rock bands, is finally here and as exciting as we'd all hoped it would be. *My Love Is Cool* kicks off with building opener "Turn To Dust", firmly placing Ellie Rowsell front and centre as she coos "Keep your beady eyes on me". After an unfortunately overproduced version of early single "Bros" (still a great song), "Your Love's Whore" kicks in with big stadium guitars and drums and "You're A Germ" channels the classic quiet verse/loud chorus mix of the bands they've been raised on. Quieter moments comes on "Silk", "Freaky" and "Soapy Water", all understated and beautiful, before the incendiary "Giant Peach" and "Swallowtail", which features shoegaze vocals from drummer Joel Amery, and a final flourish of swirling guitars round off a brilliant debut.

TIM MARKLEW

## WE CAME AS ROMANS

**We Came As Romans**

Spinefarm



Last seen on these shores getting pulverised in an In Hearts Wake/Beartooth sandwich, We Came As Romans are back to remind everyone who the kings of poppy metalcore are... and it's not We Came As Romans. To be fair, it's a crowded little market the guys exist in and WCAR have certainly sold a whole load of records in their native USA, but when you can listen to Bring Me The Horizon flip the script or their peers taking chances to push and pull the genre in every direction, it's tough to get excited about another average retread. Lead single "The World I Used To Know" is a prime example, singer Kyle Pavone's whiny voice sitting atop a Nickelback-esque bland piece of radio nu metal that'll no doubt soundtrack some poor North Dakota teen's anger at mum sending them to bed early.

SARAH O'CONNOR

## ROYAL PSALMS

**I Could Have Been Anything**

Rise



Each month we seem to see a debut from another aspiring runner in the new wave of emo/melodic hardcore/grunge hybrids – it's become such a marketable genre that even pop-metalcore-dominated labels like Rise are jumping on the train. But it's good to see some fresh talent coming in, even if the band features some old blood (there's former members of Daytrader, Crime In Stereo and Aficionado). While Royal Psalms aren't really pushing the genre into new territory, fans of Citizen and Balance and Composure might well get a kick out of this. With a distinctive vocal style and ear for memorable melodies (see "Dig" and "Constants") over palatable yet dirty guitars with cleverly constructed leads, this sadboy crew have hooked on to a sound they can produce well.

KIERAN FREESE



## CITIZEN

**Everybody Is Going To Heaven**

Run for Cover/Cooking Vinyl



Colder, darker, weirder, heavier, lighter, scarier... Citizen have pushed out as far as their boundaries will allow for their second record; and it's not going to sit well with everyone. Nor should it – as far as follow-ups go, *Everybody Is Going To Heaven* is less a complement to the band's 2013 debut, *Youth*, and more a reaction to it. There's a lot more nuance to the sum of... *Heaven's* parts – even in the march of "Cement" or the slowburn of "Ten", it feels more acutely-detailed in nature than anything they have attempted previously. Honestly, it's a surprise package – of all the bands to throw this left when a right was expected, it probably never would have been called that Citizen would step up to the plate. Perhaps it's this that makes it such a compelling record.

DAVID JAMES YOUNG



## SENSES FAIL

**Pull The Thorns From Your Heart**

Pure Noise



In stark contrast to their peers in the emospllosion of the mid '00s, not only have Senses Fail avoided breaking up (even if singer Buddy Nielsen is the sole original member) but they've managed to explore fertile new territory that is as good, if not better, than their commercial heights last decade. Heavier and grittier than ever before, the guitars are nasty and raw among squalls of feedback, and coupled with Nielsen's deepening roar, make for some legitimate horns up heavy moments from the former emo pin-up boys. On the flip side, the dreamier moments are as delicate and embracing as ever, in particular the fantastic "Wounds". Add to this Nielsen's very public musings on his sexuality, conversion to Buddhism and mental health issues that make up the lyrical content and you have an absolute cracker.

SARAH O'CONNOR



with **WILLIAM JARRATT**  
of **STORM THE SKY**



**LADY ORACLE**

**Lady Oracle**  
Pawwrite



**STYLE**

**1989**  
Taylor Swift



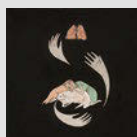
**DREAM BROTHER**

**Grace**  
Jeff Buckley



**LOVELY DAY**

**This Is All Yours**  
alt-J



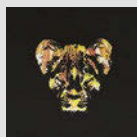
**GRANDLOVES (FEAT. YOUNG MAGIC)**

**Shrines**  
Purity Ring



**LOFT MUSIC**

**Trilogy**  
The Weeknd



**FRAIL FUTURES**

**Burn**  
Young Lions



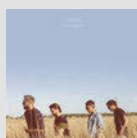
**THE PALISADES (FEAT. CHRISTIAN RICH)**

**Kauai**  
Childish Gambino



**FALLING**

**Barton Hollow**  
The Civil Wars



**THE MACHINE**

**Skin & Bones**  
Colours

**LINDEMANN**

**Skills In Pills**

Warner



As **BLUNT** eagerly anticipates Rammstein's next record, vocalist Till Lindemann unleashes this venture. He's paired with multi-instrumentalist Peter Tägtgren (Hypocrisy, Pain). Pre-release assertions that this debut offers "a mix of Rammstein vocals and Pain music" primarily ring true; the duo clearly revelled in the collaboration. Selected 'Stein fans may be off-put by the less abrasive, more goth-focused vibe, the other primary difference being Lindemann's distinctive tones uttered entirely in English. Irrespective, *Skills...* exudes an unadulterated, wickedly infectious sense of synth-heavy joy. "Golden Shower" and "Ladyboy" are filled with vividly-detailed debauchery. The lurid themes are perhaps no better typified than memorable "Praise Abort's" black comedy (also check out the decidedly NSFW video). You'll feel absolutely filthy afterwards.

**BRENDAN CRABB**



**HIGH ON FIRE**

**Luminiferous**

eOne Music/Shock



High On Fire have been unfairly saddled with the derogatory "dude metal" tag by some, seemingly only for the musical crime of being a heavy band hipsters, crust-punks and Slayer fans can all agree on. The only thing heftier than perennially shirtless, newly sober main-man Matt Pike's past girth is the titanic lommian riffs he effortlessly peels off, underlined by a rock-solid rhythm section and Kurt Ballou's production allowing just the right amount of fuzz. Pike channels paranoia about "The Elite" into absolute monsters "Carcosa" (props for the *True Detective* reference), and "Slave The Hive", their nastiest, fastest thrash in some time. "The Lethal Chamber" has a down-tempo doom that could level buildings and "The Cave's" psychedelic veneer adds another dimension. More than 15 years in, High On Fire continues to redefine the term "power trio".

**BRENDAN CRABB**



**THE WANDS**

**The Dawn**

Create/Control/Smack Face



Copenhagen duo Mads Gras and Christian Skibdal certainly know their way around the finer points of hazy psychedelia; *The Dawn* is a psych record that slips playfully in and out of woogy stoner psych and poppy bombast without ever succumbing to bleary-eyed indifference. Importantly, though, they avoid falling into '60s psych pastiche; imbuing moments like "Get It Out Of Your System (Don't You Wanna Feel Alright)" or "Circles" with enough panache and originality to give them a fresh, sparkling gleam. Elsewhere, "She's Electric" is a muscly bruiser of a tune, while "War" and "And Full Of Colours" are brilliant, breezy rollercoasters. The psychedelic wheel doesn't need to be reinvented, just kept gripping: The Wands succeed at that wildly, and *The Dawn* is as accomplished a debut as you'll find.

**JAYMZ CLEMENTS**



**KATARKLYSM**

**Of Ghosts And Gods**

Nuclear Blast



Canadian maintsays Kataklysm return with album number 12 less than two years after the well-received *Waiting For The End To Come*. The band feels rejuvenated and relentless throughout, successfully grafting onto their death metal an epicness often found in symphonic metal, but with absolutely none of the 'prettiness' associated with the genre. This is one pissed off, angry slab of hate. Drummer Oli Beaudoin is settling in nicely, as you'll hear on his virtuosic performance on "Marching Through Graveyards", while mixing is handled by the legendary Andy Sneap (Testament, Trivium, Arch Enemy), who many have accused of imprinting his own sound upon the bands he works with: that really doesn't seem to be an issue here because the forcefulness of Kataklysm's vision is strong enough to break through any sonic comparisons.

**PETER HODGSON**



**VERUCA SALT**

**Ghost Notes**

Warner



Being named for a character from a Roald Dahl novel (or the creepy 1970s film version if you're so inclined) doesn't exactly scream originality and, despite achieving notable commercial success, Veruca Salt have never found favour with the music press throughout their career. Their first album in nine years won't break that streak. The band of dual vocalists/guitarists Nina Gordon and Louise Post released their debut album way back in 1994 and three more albums and various line-up changes followed before the band went on hiatus. Now reformed with the original line-up ("hatchets buried, axes exhumed," they said), *Ghost Notes* is a solid yet uninspiring album from a mid-level band out of time. As expected, there are riffs and the famed dual vocals of Gordon and Post, but it's overly long and unadventurous. Mark under 'MOR radio-friendly rock'.

**TIM MARKLEW**



**KAMELOT**

**Haven**

Napalm/Rocket



If Kamelot were anything other than downright pompous, we would be flabbergasted. Little has altered despite the US symphonic power-prog mainstays recently segueing into a new era with fresh vocalist Tommy Karevik. Minor tweaks are detectable, but largely this adheres to formula. Thomas Youngblood's guitar melodies are tasty, but these über-slick songs are honed within an inch of their lives. There are certainly bright spots; "Citizen Zero" has dark, choral touches that help establish theatricality. Troy Donockley's (Nightwish) Uilleann pipes and the angelic Charlotte Wessels (Delain) flesh out classy ballad "Under Grey Skies". Recurring guest, Arch Enemy grunter Alissa White-Gluz injects intensity into "Revolution", and "Liar Liar (Wasteland Monarchy)" reiterates her potency. One strictly for the diehards.

**BRENDAN CRABB**



## PALACE OF THE KING

### White Bird/Burn The Sky

Listenable/Devil's Music



When you're slapped with the 'the next Jet/Airbourne/Wolfmother' tag, there's a lot to live up to. Do you go out of your way to slot into that company or do you do your own thing and survive on the force of your own sound? Palace Of The King (with The Superjesus's Tim Henwood on vocals) have set themselves apart from the current flurry of blues-based rock activity (Graveyard, Rival Sons) by blending their '70s rock with more of a snottily early Mötley Crüe attitude without buying into the theatrics and masacara. Or maybe it's a high-octane version of pre-MTV Whitesnake (especially when the organ kicks in). The riffs are simultaneously serpentine and angular, the production is colourful and multi-layered and the vocals have an element of sleazy Sunset Strip. This is rock to get drunk and fuck in the toilets to.

PETER HODGSON



## MEWITHOUTYOU

### Pale Horses

Run For Cover/Cooking Vinyl



You know exactly what you're getting into when putting on the new mewithoutYou. Don't take that the wrong way; Pale Horses is undoubtedly a good album, but you can only describe their specific brand of emotional post-hardcore music in so many ways. While they're a band that has grown with every release – in both music and maturity – they've always maintained a consistent aesthetic. From the in-your-face intensity of "Red Crow" to the subdued sadness of "Dorothy", there's nothing we haven't heard before. It's still enjoyable music but it's also music that doesn't try to take any risks or explore new grounds either. If you've never listened to mewithoutYou before, Pale Horses is as good a place as any to start, while long-time fans will undoubtedly enjoy it as well, particularly the Brother, Sister throwback track "D-Minor."

CHRIS NEILL



## BEING AS AN OCEAN

### Being As An Ocean

Double Cross/Cooking Vinyl



Last year, Being As An Ocean dropped their sophomore record, a triumphant piece of modern melodic hardcore. For the long-name-lovin' Californian band it led to a huge leap in their career, and demonstrated a considerable musical growth since their 2012 debut, as well as a massive improvement in production. Unfortunately, their third album is disadvantaged somewhat by the lack of that 'surprise' factor, and thus won't attain that 'game changer' status. However there's still a lot to enjoy. The piano intro of driving "Judas, Our Brother" is contrasted by its ending, which features eerie reverse and delay effects over a well-pocketed drum groove and "St. Peter" makes use of Joel Quartuccio's distinctive spoken word as well as containing one of the album's best clean choruses.

KIERAN FREESE

## THE MACCABEES

### Marks To Prove It

Caroline/Fiction



It's amazing to think a band from the Myspace generation is about to release their fourth album, but The Maccabees return with the follow-up to their superb Mercury-nominated 2012 album *Given To The Wild*. Across the title track and "Kamakura", *Marks To Prove It* grabs you from the get-go with the kind of intelligent, exuberant indie we've come to expect from the London band, topped as ever with Orlando Weeks's wonderful warble. As on their last album, there is a shift towards atmosphere rather than energy, the slow numbers now dominating the whole record (the first couple of tracks and "Something Like Happiness" aside). Shiny new features include female backing vocals on the excellent "Kamakura" and "Slow Sun" and lead vocals from Hugo White on "Silence". A slow-burning return, which takes a few listens.

TIM MARKLEW



## BORN LION

### Final Words

FOUR/FOUR Music



"D For Danger", one of two older singles to reappear alongside the current cut "Break The Curse" (the other being "Good Times Jimmy") dropped close to two years ago. Since then, the Sydney band have played with what are arguably the two most discernible influences on their take on rock in The Bronx and The Hives; so to say *Final Words* is anticipated is an understatement. If the three-single deep debut album already heralded thoughts of a radio rock juggernaut, the obligatory ballad "Violent Soul" will clarify further intent and execution. Since their appearance at 2013's Soundwave Festival, Born Lion have made a habit of hitting bigger stages – with the debut full-length finally here and even bigger stages looming on a tour with Yellowcard, it will be interesting to see what the next big hit is.

DAVE DRAYTON



## FEAR FACTORY

### Genexus

Nuclear Blast



It's fitting another Terminator flick arrives shortly prior to a new Fear Factory record. The sci-fi metallers could have slotted in neatly on the soundtrack – note ambient, cinematic "Expiration Date" – as their man-versus-machine themes remain a fixture. Moaning about predecessor *The Industrialist*'s programmed drums seemed farcical considering the band's over-arching calculated, precise execution. Axeman Dino Cazares has perhaps only ever had a handful of staccato riffs in his arsenal – but what riffs they are – and devises enough curious new phrasings to retain interest (aside from some reshaped moments elsewhere – "Soul Hacker" packs the mosh-bounce of 1998's *Obsolete*, and "Anodized" a trademark Burton C. Bell soaring chorus). Not game-changers anymore, Fear Factory are crowd-pleasers.

BRENDAN CRABB



## OCEAN GROVE

### Black Label

Shock



Sick. Filthy. Twisted. Dank. Believe it or not, these words are meant as sincere compliments when describing Ocean Grove's latest output. Many bands are trying and few succeeding to convincingly pull off nu metal-infused hardcore, and while at a cursory listen it might be tempting to box in Ocean Grove as a My Ticket Home-meets-Sworn In hybrid, there's so much more to be heard – from the overt grunge influences in the vocals of "B.L.U.D" to the shoegazy emo of interlude "Diploid" and the haunting lyrics of "Cold Skin". Not to mention the hefty mix that's even more impressive given the entire thing was produced, engineered, mixed and mastered by the band. *Black Label* is all at once a brooding yet crushing listen that exemplifies why we named them most important up-and-coming Aussies to keep an eye on this year.

KIERAN FREESE



## REFUSED

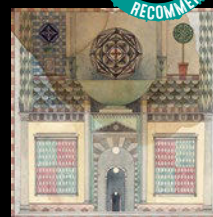
### Freedom

Epitaph



Before we get into the nuts and bolts of Refused's fourth album, a legitimate question: are you the same person you were in 1998? No joke answers if you weren't born then, darn kids. Whether you think so or not, the answer is no. Exactly why people have been expecting Refused to simply make another *Shape Of Punk To Come* is anyone's baffling guess. There's a lot of new noise on *Freedom* ("Elektra", "Kill the Man"), and a lot of things the band has never tried before ("Old Friends", "Françafrique"). It might be off-putting at first, but again it's worth remembering this was never a band concerned with one's immediate comfort. *Freedom* is confronting, electric, challenging and way better than a supposed cash-in reunion record has any right to be. As of right now, Refused have the airwaves back.

DAVID JAMES YOUNG



# BLUNT

## MIX TAPE

### CURRENTLY JAMMING AT BLUNT HQ



## SUMMER BONES

**Summer Bones**  
Hit The Lights



## MENE

**Mene**  
Brand New



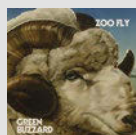
## LEECH

**Node**  
Northlane



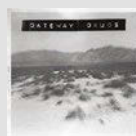
## STEADY, AS SHE GOES

**Broken Boy Soldiers**  
The Raconteurs



## ZOO FLY

**Zoo Fly**  
Green Buzzard



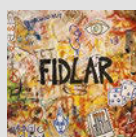
## HEAD

**Magick Spells**  
Gateway Drugs



## I KNOW A PLACE WE CAN LOVE

**I Know A Place We Can Love**  
White Summer



## 40 OZ. ON REPEAT

**Too**  
FIDLAR



## EL DORADO

**Kintsugi**  
Death Cab For Cutie

## NOPE'S

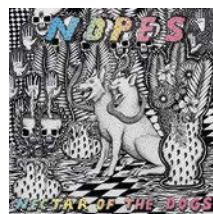
### Nectar Of The Dogs

Magnetic Eye



Oakland four-piece Nope's have crafted a wall-punching speed-freakout of a debut EP, a disgruntled suburban squawk that melts gooey punk with shredding garage pop. Opener "Matinee At Market" sounds like Green Day's bastard, trailer-trash cousin raised on Jay Reatard and Black Lips, while "Love Cycle (All Sales Final)" has all the ground-up fuzz and pop menace of Hüsker Dü mixed with the churlish, couldn't-give-a-fuck attitude of Wavves – a garage bubblegum tune left in a pocket of a jean jacket that's been in the drier too long. "Backdoor Breakdown" is a minute of scratchy energy, while "Homecoming" has Bad Brains embedded in its DNA and "Jingle Berries" is the tune where your nose is broken in the pit. In only nine minutes Nope's – noisy, messy and gloriously abrasive – may just become your new favourite punk band.

JAYMZ CLEMENTS



## EMPLOYED TO SERVE

**Greyer Than You Remember**

Shock



Emerging from the greater outreaches of western Surrey, Employed To Serve are yet another notable upstart in a wave of thought-provoking, intense British hardcore. It's almost predetermined if you're going to get anything out of *Greyer Than You Remember*, the outfit's debut LP – it comes roaring out of the gates in a wave of pounding drums, guitar noise and furious vocals from frontwoman Justine Jones. There's no moments of clarity, no breath of air once you've gone under. It's an uncompromising and crushing listen, the audio equivalent of a brass-knuckle punch. As such, it's also exhausting and difficult to digest – but, then again, isn't that the point entirely? Pound for pound, *Greyer...* is one of the best albums within this spectrum you're likely to hear this year. It's loud, raw and fucking tough.

DAVID JAMES YOUNG



## ARMORED SAINT

**Win Hands Down**

Metal Blade



Although never quite striking commercial pay-dirt, LA veterans Armored Saint's legacy is intertwined with some of metal's biggest names. Members' other responsibilities both on stage and off ensure they're only active sporadically, but led by leather-lunged John Bush, the title track is a balls-out statement of intent. Powerhouse Pearl Aday (Meatloaf's daughter) appears on the galloping "With A Full Head Of Steam" and although the lyrics of groove-laden, tongue-in-cheek "That Was Then, Way Back When" may feel somewhat hokey, they'll raise a chuckle from anyone who's received a Facebook friend request from someone they've avoided since high school. Meandering in spots, a growler in others, *Win...* scratches the trad-metal nostalgia itch without relying on past goodwill.

BRENDAN CRABB



## GUANTANAMO BAYWATCH

**Darling... It's Too Late**

Smack Face/Create/Control



*Darling...* tones down some of the brattish-ness of their previous releases, features the Gitmo folks' cleanest production yet (maybe a disappointment to resolutely garage vibe-loving types), and turns their '50s surf music leanings all the way up. It's more sped up, The Shadows-esque instrumentals than it is Southern Culture On The Skids. It's also a kind of mash-up of different but related genres from the era, and comes off as a compilation tape, maybe an installment in the White Trash Rockers series. The sugary "Too Late" and "Beat Has Changed" are low points, and Guantanamo Baywatch are at their best when they're doing instrumentals, such as in highlight "Corey Baum's Theme" – a kind of "Just Dropped In" with lots of surfish tremolo picking. Fun, bar the doo wop bits.

BRENT BALINSKI



## EMERY

### You Were Never Alone

Bad Christian



A new record from Christian post-hardcore act Emery is an interesting proposition in 2015. Much like their peers in Haste The Day, this is a crowdfunded effort post lengthy break and similarly sees Emery exploring a musical language that has long since fallen from popular favour. That's not down to trends though; if Underoath, Thursday and Thrice have shuffled off the mortal coil for lack of an agenda, what do a minor league entrant like Emery have to contribute? The answer is able, wiry melodic rock ("The Beginning", "Taken For A Bath") with the odd divergence into scuzzy screamo ("Thrash", "Hard Times"). Fans will no doubt rejoice in their heroes' return, and any accidental listeners will have an adequately enjoyable time. For the rest, you're not missing anything crucial to your existence.

SARAH O'CONNOR



## GATEWAY DRUGS

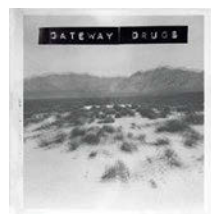
**Magick Spells**

Dine Alone/Cooking Vinyl



Finally, a response to the long asked question: what would happen if the children of The Knack's bassist started a band? Answer: *Magick Spells*. For their debut album Gateway Drugs hit the ground running, opening with the one-two noise pop punch of "Anu" and "Mommy", followed by the energetic garage rock of "Head" and "Faith Healer". What starts out as a promising record unfortunately collapses under its own weight. There's a noticeable loss of momentum on the latter half of the album, leaving us with a handful of tracks that seem somewhat uninspired. There's an attempt at experimentation with the doo-wop throwback "Til You Come Around", but its existence is just as bigarre as it is unnecessary. There's hope for Gateway Drugs yet if they can keep things together on album #2.

CHRIS NEILL



# ON THE RECORD WITH SAM MACINTYRE OF MARMOZETS



## **What was the first album or single you ever bought with your own money?**

Let me think. I went to Asda once, it's like a supermarket chain in the UK, and I tried to buy a Marilyn Manson tape but my mum wouldn't let me buy it because of "the devil" and stuff, so I ended up buying a Chemical Brothers single on CD, and a really old Kings Of Leon single. I didn't really get introduced to music, physical music, until I was a bit older because where I lived, there was nothing to do and everyone was boring. I actually didn't listen to music with headphones and stuff like that until I was about 10, which is kinda weird. The first album I ever bought was The Black Eyed Peas' *Elephunk*.

## **What one album changed your life more than any other and in what way?**

Queens Of The Stone Age's *Songs For The Deaf* because it was just so good – it is so good. Every single song it's just like, "What?!", Refused's *The Shape Of Punk To Come* was also a mindblower. This time last year I was actually with Dennis [Lyxgén] talking to him about it, 'cos they've been planning it for quite a while I think. I knew about a new album about a year ago so I've been waiting ages and they only recently announced that they were going to do one. Fantastic band. Sigur Rós' first album *Von* blew my mind as well. And the self-titled Bon Iver!

## **What is one album or song that reminds you of your childhood?**

I remember when I first listened to "Let's Get Retarded" on the *Elephunk* album. It's quite bad, isn't it? 'Cos then they did a radio version "Let's Get It Started". I always remember "Let's Get Retarded" though, that one's a classic. "Hello Operator" by

The White Stripes reminds me of my childhood a lot as well. Me and our guitarist, the band we were in when we were 11 used to play it all the time. Anything Jack White touches is gold.

## **What album instantly puts you in a good mood?**

Bon Iver's self-titled album always puts me in a good mood; it always brightens my day up.

## **What is one obscure album in your collection that should everyone know about?**

Oh yes! Let's have a think... Butthole Surfers – *Locust Abortion Technician*. Basically one of my favourite riffs ever, from "Kuntz", the Red Hot Chili Peppers stole it off them, well they probably didn't steal it off them, but they used it. It's an absolute tune. Insanely fucking funny and amazing psychedelic rock type stuff.

## **What one album do you consider to be your guilty pleasure?**

Taylor Swift's *Red* album. Gotta be a bit of Swiftly. It's full-on pop – I love it.

## **What is the ultimate house-trashing party album?**

This band called And So I Watch You From Afar and the album is *All Hail Bright Futures*. Listen to that album; it will change your life, I guarantee it. They're an instrumental band, but they're one of the greatest bands on the planet. It's all alternative rock but it's so big and there's riffs. If you're really into Queens Of The Stone Age and The White Stripes, these guys nail it. It's like riff city.

## **What is the best album to listen to when hungover on a Sunday morning?**

Metric's *Fantasies*. That's really cool; I really like that one. I always listen to that when I'm hungover if I'm travelling somewhere 'cos it's kind of like relaxing rock; it's a female singer, but she's really soft.

## **What's one album that made you want to start a band?**

It would have to be *Favourite Worst Nightmare* by Arctic Monkeys. When that came out, that's when we sort of started the band and we actually covered "Brianstorm" back in 2007 or 2008. Great album.

## **What's one album that you wish you had performed on?**

Nirvana's *Nevermind*! Who wouldn't? It's one of the greatest rock albums in history, or one of the most famous anyway.

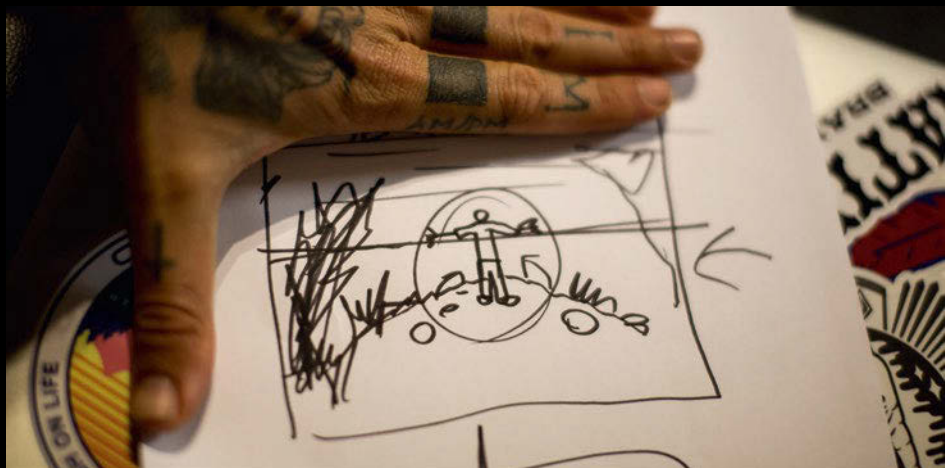
## **What's one album or song you want played at your funeral?**

Whitney Houston featuring Mariah Carey, is it called "Miracles"? Or "When You Believe"? [Singing] "There can be miracles when you believe, when you believe..." That song [laughs]. I'd like that song so much. Actually, "Live Forever" by Oasis would be a good one, 'cos that'd just be really ironic, wouldn't it? [Singing] "You and I are gonna live forever..."

## **What is the last album you bought and what did you think of it?**

My friend's band Royal Blood brought out a self-titled album last year which is really good. Great band, great lads. We get to see them soon 'cos we're doing a few festivals with them, so that'll be great. Fantastic album.

## GET REEL WITH ED LAMINGTON



## THE AMITY AFFLICTION

SEEMS LIKE FOREVER

ROADRUNNER/WARNER



Music documentaries usually fall into two categories: warts'n'all day-in-the-life of an horrific tour/album recording or a series of talking heads recapping the entire history of a band's existence. When done well, both can be exceptionally engaging. *Seems Like Forever* works as a prime example of the latter approach, as band members past and present and long-term hangers-on relive the trials and triumphs of The Amity Affliction's 12-year career on camera, peppered with live footage, candid studio moments, general goofing around and some choice high school photos.

There's genuinely enough drama in their journey from teenage Queensland punks to epic stadium

warriors to warrant an hour on the couch and you're never too far away from a thundering breakdown on the soundtrack anyways. We highly recommend watching this with the surround sound on 11, like we did. Sure, it's an eye-opening tale for those only casually acquainted with the band – near death experiences, their own record label recommending they boot screamer Joel Birch out of the band – but this film really hits its mark as a love letter to the fans that have championed their rise, a one-stop destination for all the highlights, lowlights and, of course, kick-arse music videos. Plus, the footage from their latest Australian tour for *Let The Ocean Take Me* is as epic as it

gets with hordes of dedicated Amity fans braving pouring rain and volatile moshpits to scream every word of the latest anthems.

Well-paced and beautifully shot, the film strikes an even balance between both sides of their collective persona: the fun-lovin' travelling mosh show and a band that's willing to discuss the darker side of youth mental health issues that others avoid.

With plenty of laughs, wild live footage and a handful of potentially teary moments, *Seems Like Forever* serves as a fitting tribute to one of Australia's finest heavy music exports and the dedicated fanbase that have kept them on the road.

# GAME TIME WITH GLEN DOWNEY

CONSOLE VERSIONS LOOK AMAZING, BUT GRAPHICS LIKE IN THESE SCREENSHOTS WILL REQUIRE YOU TO DROP A FEW GRAND ON A BEASTLY PC.



## THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT

PS4 • XB1 • PC

BANDAI NAMCO



On the surface, *The Witcher 3* seems to be yet another vast open-world game in an increasingly vast landscape of vast open-world games. But it sounds like that last sweet Watain album so screw it, here goes. Polish developers CD Projekt Red actually seem to care about what goes on in their open world, how it goes on, why it goes on, and how it could possibly be as metal as goddamned possible. A vibrant and diverse medieval fantasy landscape is peppered with all manner of characters. A civil unrest between an invading military presence and a thick fog of

supernatural misery envelop the simply enormous game. Every square foot of the world CD Projekt Red created, from peasant to apocalyptic lightning-riding bone-armoured King of the Wild Hunt, is metal-as-fuck. Boss fights play out like Behemoth lyrics and if you're starting a black metal band, find a ridge near any tree littered with hanging corpses, line up the moon, take a screenshot and there's your next EP cover. Fair warning for the timid, however: it's an old-school PC RPG at heart, meaning casual observers of the genre, like us, will be immediately overwhelmed by the sheer scope

of control. Loot management, consumable items, crafting possibilities, skill trees, spell casting, potion brewing, weapon forging, armour tailoring and then some make for a labyrinthine menu screen that isn't helped by its clunky interface and muddling navigation. Combat works, but it's by no means elegant. Console players will feel like they've run out of buttons juggling weapons and spells and potions, and collision detection bugs will hand you damage for seemingly nothing more often than we'd like. That being said, we still loved it. It's a tense, harrowing, bloody, slow burn and its payoff rewards the patient.



## PROJECT CARS

PS4 • XB1 • WIIU • PC

BANDAI NAMCO



Promising to topple the Xbox racing sim king *Forza* and bring real racing to PS4 was *Driveclub*. A beautiful mess but ultimately a shallow arcade racer, now that *Project CARS* has landed everyone can put some rubber to the track. *Project CARS*, which stands for Community Assisted Racing Simulator, was crowdfunded and then produced by Slightly Mad Studios – the same team as the unfortunately overlooked *Need For Speed: Shift* series. Hyper-realistic racing physics and mostly nuts and bolts car customisation didn't really suit

the all-nitro, all-drift approach expected of *Need For Speed* but with that name shed, this is about as sim as it gets. Especially for console gamers. There's a single player campaign that you can attack as you please but every car is unlocked from the get-go. This is what a sim should be, but trophy hunters and traditionalists will find the lack of incentive makes for a fairly baron game proper. For the rest of us, it means there's less nonsense in the way of what we play racing games for. Racing. Gorgeous graphics combine with a mostly-on-point

physics engine to provide a super immersive track experience. Real-time weather effects throw a layer of uncertainty to the next corner that gives each race a unique angle. That being said, this one is only going to scratch the itch for pure racing fans. Xbox owners looking for more car customisation options and more actual campaign progression would do better to pick up *Forza*. *Forza* owners will find a shallower overall game but a far more satisfying racing simulation. PS4 owners looking for a racing sim can add a star to the score and go get it now.

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## UNFD

Celebrating the release of their flagship band Northlane's latest album, *Node*, we've got one hell of a vinyl giveaway that will be going to a lucky subscriber from this issue. It's the ultimate vinyl kickstarter pack, jam-packed with a host of colourful, limited edition records. At the top of the list is the Northlane *Node* Limited Edition Collectors' Box Set that is out July 24 and contains 11 x 7" records. Seem pretty epic? Well you can add this whole thwack of goodies to the list too:

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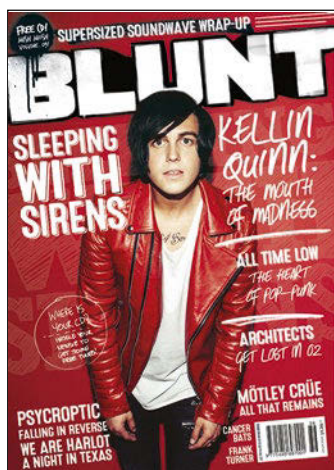
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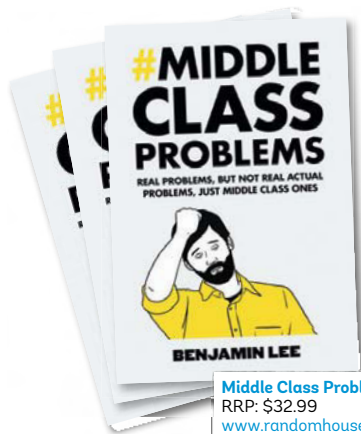
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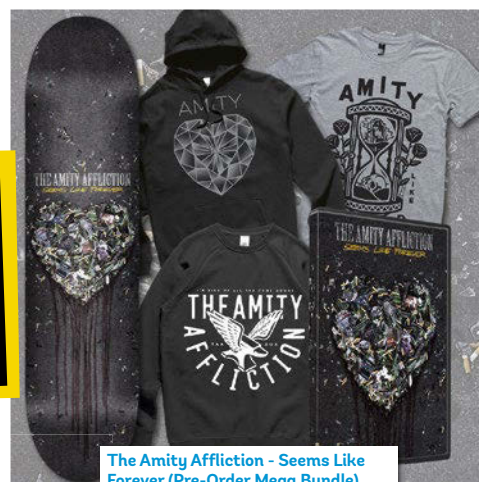
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## JAY AND SILENT BOB DVDS

Whether in animated form, in front of the camera or live on stage, Jason Mewes and Kevin Smith – aka Jay and Silent Bob – are experts in providing stoner-approved LOLs to the world. With the duo headed our way for a run of shows this September, we've been gifted five copies of *Jay & Silent Bob's Super Groovy Cartoon Movie* to pass on to some lucky readers courtesy of Eagle Entertainment. Now, put down that bong and tell us in 25 words or less which is your favourite Kevin Smith movie and why. C'mon, you'll win a thing! *Jay and Silent Bob's Super Groovy Cartoon Movie* is available on DVD from August 26.



## TOKYOFLASH KISAI LINK WATCHES

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## BEHEMOTH DOUBLE-PASSES

There's few things everyone at **BLUNT** HQ all agree on but when Behemoth comes on the office playlist, it's time for universal horns up. These Polish blackened death metal heroes are also not to be missed live, so if you fancy joining us in the front row and chucking a proper windmill, we have double-passes to give away for every show on their Australian tour with Watain and Bölzer (yes, we'll be at every show, that's how dear our love is for these Satansists). Pick from the dates below and tell us what makes you the most evil out of all our entrants!

Tuesday Sep 29th – Capitol, Perth (18+)  
Thursday October 1st – Max Watt's, Brisbane (18+)  
Friday October 2nd – Fowlers Live, Adelaide (AA)  
Saturday October 3rd – The Metro, Sydney (18+)  
Sunday October 4th – 170 Russell, Melbourne (18+)

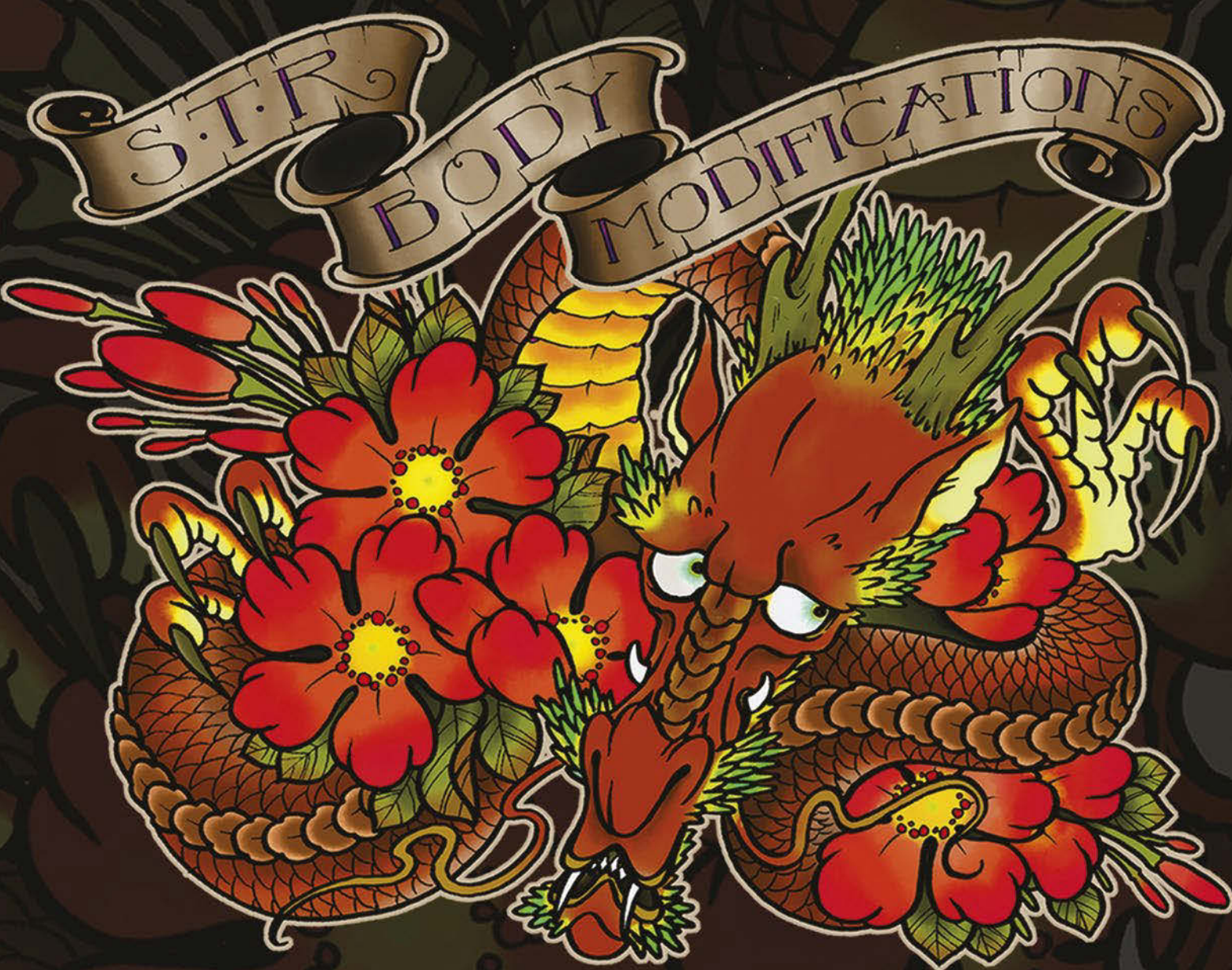


## BREAKING BENJAMIN MERCH PACKS

Six years on from their last release, seminal alt rock outfit Breaking Benjamin are bringing out a new album called *Dark Before Dawn* with an entirely new line-up. Benjamin Burnely is still at the helm, and we're stoked to declare that this is the classic BB you fell in love with all those years ago. Thanks to Universal, we've got five Breaking Benjamin packs up for grabs including a copy of *Dark Before Dawn* on CD, plus a T-shirt, hat and sweatband. Need to win one? Tell us your favourite track from the band's back catalogue and what you think it's about.

Write your answer on the back of an envelope along with your name and address and send it to: **BLUNT Comps** (with the name of the comp): P.O. Box 5555, St. Leonards NSW 1590, or enter online at [bluntmag.com.au](http://bluntmag.com.au)

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ENTRY:** 1. Entry is open to residents of Australia and New Zealand except employees and immediate families of nextmedia and its agencies associated with the promotion. 2. Only entries completed with these terms and conditions will be eligible. 3. Entry is by mail and online only. 4. Competition begins July 2nd 2015 and entries close August 13th 2015. 5. In determining eligibility the judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 6. The winners will be drawn at 9am August 17th 2015 at nextmedia Level 6, Building A, 207 Pacific Highway, St Leonards NSW 2065. 7. Prizes must be taken as offered and are not redeemable for cash. 8. The promoter is not responsible for misdirected or lost mail. 9. The winners will be notified by mail. 10. Total prize value is \$1,337. 11. The promoter is nextmedia Pty Ltd ACN: 128 805 970, Level 6, Building A, 207 Pacific Highway, St Leonards NSW 2065



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# TILL LINDEMANN

Rammstein fans know that Till Lindemann's lyrics can be pretty... intense, but the German delivery usually reduces the impact. Now he's exploring the same topics with Peter Tägtgren (Hypocrisy, Pain) in a new side project called Lindemann – but this time he's singing in English.

Words by Peter Zalugny.



**So how did Peter Tägtgren respond when you said, "I've written lyrics about ladyboys, sex with fat women, and golden showers?"**

Big eyes, jaw down and he went, "Oh fuck". But then he went around and asked his family because, kind of like me, when it comes to the home life we're family people. On the first record we did with Rammstein, the seventh song ["Das Alte Leid"] goes, "I want to fuck!" It sounds silly in English but in German – "Ich will ficken!" – it's a bit different. In those days nobody dared to say a line like that in a chorus, and sometimes at the beginning I was really unsure about saying things like that, so I'd ask my mum.

**There seem to be a lot of songs about sex and sexually taboo topics on your new record. Why do you enjoy exploring these themes?**

It's a very simple answer: sex sells, and it's fun to see reactions. People get pissed off or they really like it and they start laughing; there's so much attention going on. And if I sit down and there's an instrumental, it doesn't matter if it's Rammstein or from Peter, and I get this feeling, it just comes

out of the blue, I say "cunt!" It just jumps out of my brain! It comes step by step, and then I frame it with a story.

**In the past that sort of subject matter landed Rammstein on the Index of Media Harmful to Young Persons in Germany. Do you think *Skills In Pills* will generate similar controversy?**

Definitely. But the record companies are going to be dancing on the table because if they [German federal agency] censor it, then they're pushing it. It's so stupid; the internet is open, but when it comes to art or music they're still censoring stuff! But I understand that these parts of the government have to do it because the wings of conservative people are losing their jobs [laughs].

**Why do you tend to write lyrics that are so direct then?**


I've thought about that many times, and maybe it's because everyone from Rammstein grew up in the east part of Germany, so we weren't allowed to shout it out and sing whatever we wanted. We had to be really smart and beat about the bush;

we always had to find synonyms. I'm totally happy with the country I live in; I can do whatever I want there now, but not in the old days.

**That all changed when the Berlin Wall came down. Do you remember what that night was like?**

Really strange. In those days I lived up in the north of Germany, and all my friends went down to Berlin or to the border side. But when the border came down on the first night, it happened in Berlin so all the other people heading from east to west through the country border got arrested because it was still closed! It was a big fucking mess! So I went to bed, and it felt like something was really strange. I didn't like it; it was like leaving my comfort zone.

**The direct nature complements the subject matter in a way, but it sounds like *Skills In Pills* only explores sex, not love. Why is that?**

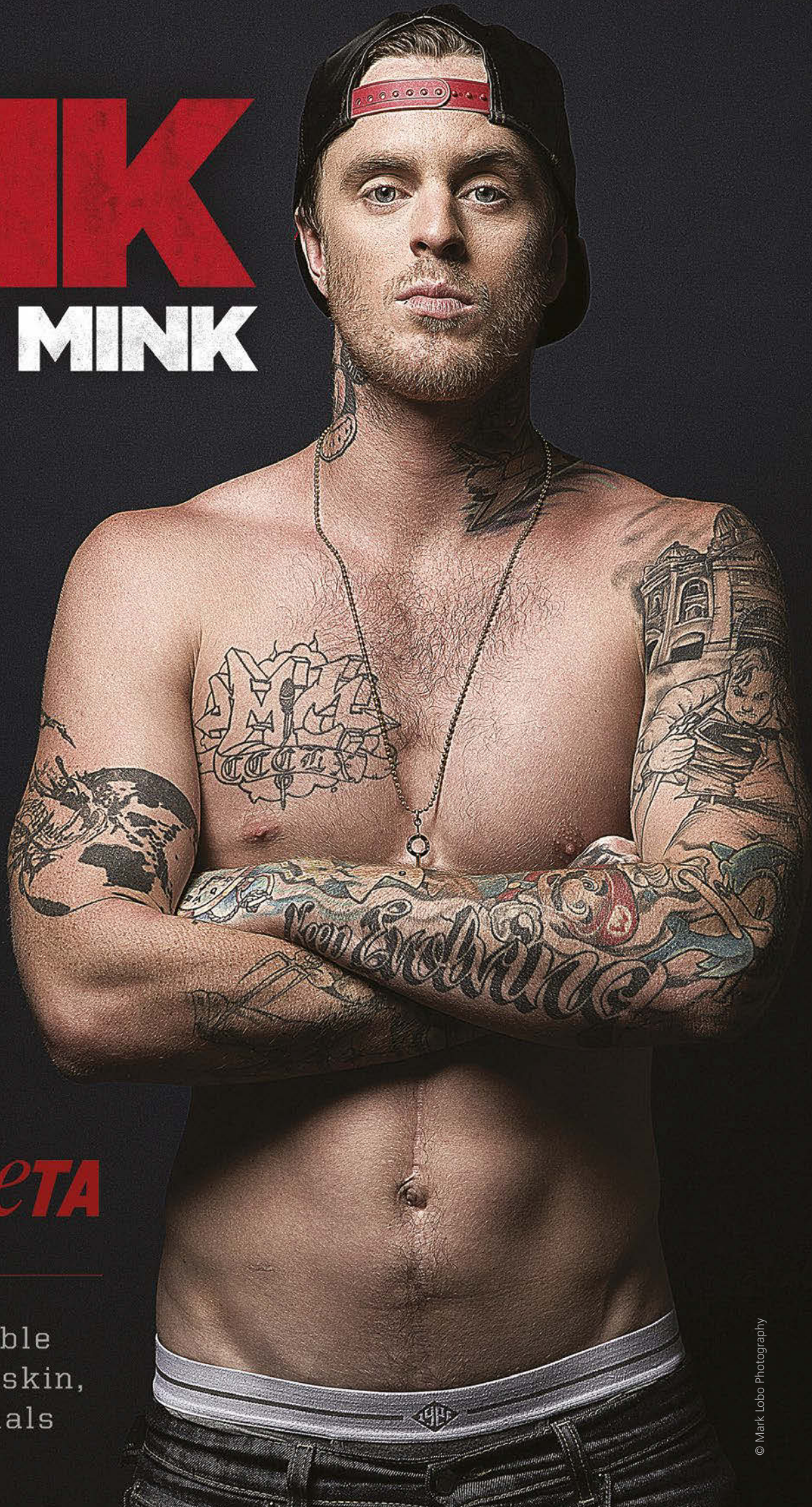
This is all love, maybe it seems like a fetish but in the end it's all love. Just for example, you take "Fat" – how much must you love a person to stay when they don't fit a bed anymore because they get really big? This is a kind of love. The last track, "That's My Heart", it's a love song. I think there's a lot of love inside, just read between the lines. 

**"SOMETIMES AT THE BEGINNING I WAS REALLY UNSURE ABOUT SAYING THINGS LIKE THAT, SO I'D ASK MY MUM." TILL LINDEMANN**



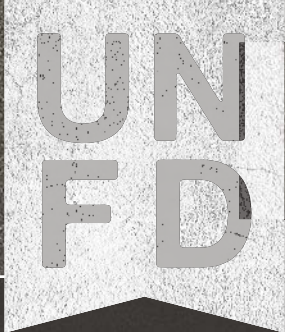
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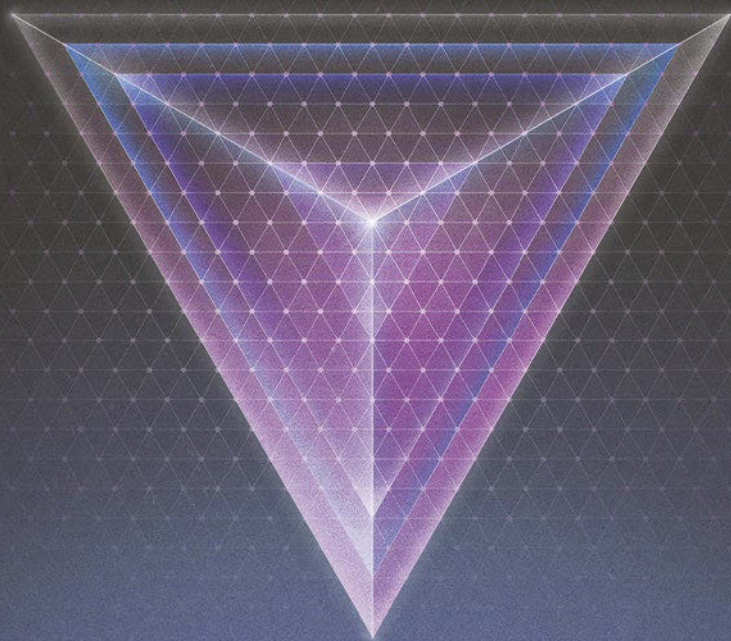


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